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# Gandhi and Gandhism

[A STUDY]

By

DR. B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

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## PART IV



## CHAPTER X

# GANDHISM AND SOCIALISM

### I

#### *Socialism*

In the march of the evolution of the world from the unicellular amoeba to the highly complex organism known as civilized man, we trace different levels which range from the aqueous to the amphibious, on to the terrestrial, vertebrate quadruped, biped anthropoid and human stages. The birds of the air have their nests, the beasts of the field have their lairs, and the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve have their humble hovels or their heaven-soaring sky-scrapers. The denizens of the forest prowl about by night for prey and live in bowers or lairs or caves. They live by their might in a world of competition in which the weakest go to the wall. Man has cultivated the principle of co-operation. But the relics of the competitive age survive in the machine civilizations of the west,—of Europe and America, where it is not one man that lives upon another, but it is one nation that exploits a second, where a perpetual warfare is going on between not only the nations of the West and of the East, but equally amongst the different nations of the West themselves. In this warfare, periodical wars have become the recognized means of settling



differences, and man is obliged once again to tear up his fellowmen, prowl about for human prey, as it were, and live in lairs, dug-outs and trenches—underground. Civilization is thus being shaken to its foundations and we witness a certain atavism in the march of evolution.

### *Inverted Progress in India*

When one nation is conquered by another and that conquest is made multi-faceted, it will not take very long, as it has not taken long in India, for the cardinal features of the culture and civilization, of the arts and crafts, of the aims and objects of national life, of the conquered nation to be superseded by those of the conquering nation. It is thus that within a space of eighty years from the Great Indian Mutiny, the complexion of society has been completely changed by contact with Western institutions and the influence of Western life and literature. It is not merely in the domain of Education or of Justice or of Legislation that these influences have been deeply felt through Colleges, Courts and Councils, but they have left an indelible mark upon the markets of India; the fashions and fabrics adopted by the people, the love of machinery fostered by the industrial magnates hailing from the West and consequential denudation of the villages on the one hand and concurrent growth of the towns at the expense of the former on the other. And in spite of the poverty of India, capital has accumulated by a process of squeezing the blood of villagers into towns and pouring it into certain business concerns. With this capital, mills and machinery have been planted which have completed the work of destruction of

village crafts and arts originally initiated by the import of western power-made goods. Indian society which had been reared for ages on a well-balanced regulation of wealth and power and had successfully eliminated all unemployment, has after centuries of foreign rule, begun to present problems as serious as those confronting the west. In India, the onslaughts of Capitalism may not have been as disastrous as those in the West. But the very Feudalism that has given rise to Capitalism in the West has made its way into India as well and presented problems of accumulated wealth in the hands of a few aristocrats, and a large peasantry without rights of occupation of land, and therefore obliged virtually to lead the life of serfs. In the West, the reaction against Capitalism has taken the form of Socialism, not indeed as an armoury put on by the rich but as a new trend of society designed to correct the evils which have necessarily followed in the train of the ever growing capitalistic endeavours. The cities of India have in a measure, copied those industries and although the number of labourers working in the whole country in all its power industries has not gone beyond twenty lacs or two million, yet the problems of housing, education, tending of children, maternity, relationship between wages and profits and between work and wages, hours of work and holidays,—all these have pushed themselves to the front and eclipsed the problem of unemployment affecting the unnumbered millions in the villages. Educated young men who have inherited the culture of the West, its economic theories and problems, have also inherited an easy bias for the socialistic trend of thought which must necessarily follow the capitalistic line of development.

*Rapid strides of Socialism in India*

Though the evolution of socialistic tendencies in Indian politics is of recent origin, yet they have taken rapid strides during the short interval of a decade and have given rise to acute differences in the Congress. They have, however, been since thrown into the background by the tangible results which have followed the cult of Non-violence that lies behind the Gandhian philosophy. In fact, once the potency of Non-violence is conceded, a new and inexhaustible source of power stands revealed before us and a social structure reared on the recognition of this principle has proved itself to be a new power-house, where Gandhi, the operator, is creating through his dynamo of Non-violence and Truth endless, electro-motor power which would move mountains and uproot empires. On the constructive side, it has delved and dug up as if by motor driven tractors, the debris of a nation that is earth-quaked and is carrying on the great process of salvage so as to restore to life and vigour the dying and dead attributes of an ancient civilisation. The socialism of Gandhi is not a mere physical force, but a moral power that has helped to refertilize the barren fields of national culture which have become fallow through neglect and which have even been petrified from within. He bases it all, however, on non-violence and abjures violence in thought, word and deed.

When our comrades plead hard for a socialistic government, they will not readily tell us whether they will achieve their object by violence or non-violence. They have, therefore, steadily gravitated either to the non-violent school and are merely absorbed in the Gan-

dhian cult or frankly deviated into communistic principles and become apostles of violence. They bring out the vivid contrast between a form of society in which the divisions are set on socio-economic lines holding the balance of power amongst the various groups for all time and that other form of society which is in a state of perpetual flux and in which there are eternal convection currents boiling over in the cauldron of life upon the fires of competition and violence, tending to create a stress and strain by the bottom layers always striving to rise to the level of the top strata. The struggle to-day is really between the concept of an omnipotent state and that of human personality, between competition and co-operation, between spirit and matter, between money and service, between the steering wheel and the spinning wheel.

### *Spirit of Times*

No custom or institution, however ancient or sacred, can help being challenged by the spirit of the changing times. "Per contra" no change, however attractive, can be accepted without demur. These are but platitudes, but platitudes also embody truths which serve as guides to conduct in life. That is why India is now being called upon to choose between a wholesale acceptance, on the one hand, of measures and methods designed in the West to cure the evils which have followed the industrial revolution of the past century and a half, and on the other, a timely and sympathetic re-examination of the ancient structure and functions of society, its distribution of duties, its organization of the country—resulting in a balance of life revolving on its five axes, namely, (1) National-

ism and Internationalism, (2) Economic Capitalism represented by the Vysya pitted against the principle of socialism and the problems of labour worked out through a labouring caste, the joint-family and the village community, (3) Religion developing the spiritual aspects of life antagonized by science directing the material aspects, (4) dictatorship, not of men but of Dharma, confronting the democracy of growth, not action, and (5) Non-violence as the master controlling force as the servant. So balancing the opposites, we have a synthesis of contraries effected, producing a happy harmony of the immediate and the remote, a blend of principle and expediency, and a correlation of the mundane and the celestial. No solution, therefore, which is ancient need be rejected on that ground, no problem which is modern need be deemed insoluble on this ground. When we have embarked upon this duty which is as arduous as it is healthy, we shall strive hard to adopt preventive measures instead of merely curative. Cure is good but prevention is better whether it be in the domain of bodily disease or disease of the body politic, and it is in this spirit that we plead for a study of the principles which have regulated the structure and functions of Hindu Society and the age-long methods by which they had abolished concentration of wealth even if they did not abolish poverty and by which too they had eliminated unemployment even if they could not have abolished under-employment.

### *Two Types of Civilization*

Broadly speaking the civilisations of the world may be studied under two classifications—those based on wealth and those based on culture or learning. It

is usually said that the Goddess of Wealth is somewhat fickle in her affections, while the Goddess of Learning is less so. There has been in Indian tradition an age-long conflict between the two Goddesses of Wealth and Learning and indeed this very conflict has been utilised as the basis of Indian civilisation. Wealth and learning have been kept apart here and the balance of power has been sustained in society by this sort of compensatory pendulum operating the clockwork of society. A civilisation so nurtured has been suddenly exposed to the onslaughts of a sister civilisation from the West, based on the ascendancy of wealth to which learning has been made subservient and in the acquisition of which it has been made an instrument.

As things stand, it will be admitted that that civilization must be said to have failed when under its influence,

Ryots raise crops and starve,  
Weavers weave cloth and go naked,  
Co-operative officers borrow and don't pay,  
Doctors become patients and die,  
Lawyers become litigants and lose,  
Engineers build houses which collapse,  
Teachers' sons study and fail in Examinations,  
Public servants draw salaries but serve not the public,  
Banks receive deposits and close their doors,  
Income-tax officers' sons become Insurance agents,  
A mother poisons her children,  
A father beats his sons, and  
A hedge consumes the field.

The fact is that grab and greed have taken the place of sympathy and fellowship, speculation has displaced honesty in business, fraud has superseded rectitude, and passions have overridden judgment and even natural affections. Above all learning has been

made the hand-maid of wealth and its tool.

Two courses have all along sought to gain ascendancy—one over the other, in the determination of the socio-economic development of the world—namely Individualism and Collectivism. One is pure free competition and the other is pure State-Socialism. *Pure free competition* leaves all field to the business man with no monopolies, no subsidies, no privileges, no labour unions, no social legislation, no barriers whatever to free exchange of goods. Government maintains Law and Order. That is all. Buy cheap: sell dear, is the slogan. Profits make for philanthropy but they are sacred.

*Pure State Socialism* abolishes rent, interest, royalties, speculation and unearned income. Government owns land, buildings, equipment, transport, employs all labour, rents at cost, buys at cost, provides labour to all willing to work. No idle rich are met with. None is poor or wealthy. All product of industry passes back to "creators." The Truth is really midway.

What lies at the bottom of this disparity is the love of property both by the individual and by the nation as a whole. While the Capitalist who has accumulated wealth wants more wealth, the imperialist who has acquired dominion wants more dominion. The abolition of property as well as family appears, therefore, at the first sight as the quick and sure remedy but by long and bitter experience Russia which sought to abolish property, marriage and religion, has after twenty years, been obliged to restore all the three. When you take the film photo of a gesture, a hundred pictures have to be combined to give the effect. No single picture out of them serves the purpose. Even so we must take the aggregate of Russian Revolution, not its diffe-

rent stages as its pictorial representation. It has not been realized the world over that the last test of private rights is whether those rights are or are not being exercised for the common good of society. According to Saint Ambrose:

It is the will of God that the earth should be the common possession of all men and should furnish its fruits to all. It was avarice that created the right of property, it is therefore just that man who claims for his private ownership that which was given to the human race in common, should distribute at least some of this to the poor. Private property is for the common good. Otherwise it is not justifiable. Private property is good only as the servant of the common weal. A man does not own anything in this world with an absolute possession that places him outside the Law of God and excuses him from considering that he owes God anything in return for the exercise of his right.

Says St. Thomas Aquinas:

Temporal goods which are given to men by God are his as regards their possession, but as regards their use, if they should be superfluous to him, they belong to others who may profit by them.

Therefore, the owner of property has claim on it according to his needs, but after he has satisfied himself reasonably, he has to meet the needs of others. It has been well said: "The Property Owner has duties; the poor man has rights."

In the Age of Faith it was unanimously held that "to give away to the needy is not an act of charity, but of justice"—of social justice. In our day, Pope Pius XI has more clearly stated that Charity is no substitute for justice unfairly withheld. Men who refuse justice do no charity.

One of the gravest defects of Modern times [says a writer



in the *Social-Order*], is that there is so little private property in the sense that there are so few people who really own property on which they can live. Indeed, it may be said that private property in the moral sense has disappeared because the people are not possessors of property on which they live and because there is no recognition of the responsibility of stewardship.

Owners of superfluous wealth who do not use private property for the common good are blind to their own good. They rarely come in contact with distress. They rarely give alms in the moral sense. This is why State intervention has become inevitable. The State cannot ignore distress. The State is compelled to fulfil the duty which Moral Law enjoins on individuals. If property-owners do not accept the responsibilities of stewardship, ownership must perish.\*

It is thus that Gandhi has constantly pleaded for the view that owners of property are but trustees for society and that it is not open to them merely to pile up more property or to spend it all lavishly upon themselves. It may not be widely known that H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore holds the State as trustee for the Padmanabhaswami of Tiruvananthapuram (Tiruvendrum).

### *State Socialism*

Sometimes we hear eloquent praises of collective ownership but we do not see readily how even this is fully compatible with regimentation and authoritarian spirit in education, industry as well as administration. The first sanction of the State is there—namely, Force in police, in the services. The second sanction—namely, the press is gagged or at any rate controlled. Just as there is veiled slavery in a capitalistic society

\* The Social Order, Allahabad—Nov. 1, 1940.

ridden by the usurer and the mass producer for export not for consumption, even so there is an insidious slavery in this so-called State-socialism. Only instead of pinpricks of individuals, you have the hammer strokes of institution.

Under a perfectly organized system of State Socialism, [says Aldous Huxley], charity would be not merely superfluous but actually criminal. Good Samaritans would be prosecuted for daring to interfere in their bungling, amateurish way with what was obviously a case for State-aid-professionals.

Nor is mere democracy a panacea for these social evils. The cardinal point to remember is whether production is for service or for money. If State control leads to Fascism, democracy covers behind its veil Imperialism. Democracy is only an aid to it. The Law of Primogeniture in England makes the first born son the sole heir to property, mills, parks, hunting grounds and estates. The junior sons are the mill agents, administrative governors of Dominions, Colonies and Dependencies, controlling markets. Then come the nephews and brothers-in-Law who are wholesale agents or retail purveyors. In Britain, only 8 per cent of the population live on agriculture, the rest on Industry. The whole of England and Scotland or Britain is a limited company, called the British Empire, Limited, the Memorandum and Articles of which prescribe the objects as Imperialism—the acquisition of raw materials, the sale of finished products and the exercise of the necessary political and military control through a multi-faceted domination—territorial and administrative, mental and moral, intellectual and spiritual. Exploitation becomes all the more methodical and regimented by planning, by bonuses and subven-

tions and by guarantees by the State. Intra-national planning may be good, provided it does not lead to extra-national confusion in which all International exploitation is bound to result.

The process of converting one form of society into another cannot be achieved by any kaleidoscopic quickness unless violence intervenes. And any growth by the force of violence becomes an accretion not an intussusception. The former is mechanical, the latter physiological or biological. Quick change artists like the war lords of nations may appeal to our fancy for sensation, our love of adventure, but these wane with the abatement of pressure and excitement. They are attended by a general apathy towards constructive reform—which is an arduous and wearisome process and may be followed by a sense of lassitude and ennui. Already such violent changes have been introduced into Indian society. We are a nation which has all along placed the ideal of service on a high pedestal. But it has been thrown down into the dust.

What is really baneful to society is the installation of money in place of service. Our ancient society in India is devoted to the latter. The West worships at the shrine of Mammon. Machinery leads to it and makes it inevitable. Monetary manipulation is a game at which two can play. If you can drain a tank by a side tube and draw off more water than you are entitled to, surreptitiously, the same pranks can be played by your neighbours opposite and aside. The clandestine trick fails of its purpose. Deflation of money leads to increased trade through augmentation of exports but every nation cannot augment its exports *ad infinitum*. A rise in exports means a corresponding fall in the production of the victim of your export trade—and this

cannot last for ever. Nationalism may yet be redirected to the paths of peace from the paths of war along which it now moves. Our national planning should develop ourselves, not hurt the development of others. Each nation must, therefore, plan its own destiny. Neither Russia, nor Germany, nor Italy can guide us.

We must guide ourselves and this is the aim and purpose of Gandhism. If Socialism must be Indianized, so too must planning. To this end we must familiarize ourselves with the structure and functions of our society, the progress and retrogressions therein and the fortunes and vicissitudes that have brought it to the present pass. We must revert to a decentralized society which alone ensures progress in times of peace, for centralization is the very prime need of war. Nor do democracies and military preparations go together. They are a mutual contradiction, for all democracies have crumbled the moment war begins. If they do not crumble, the war fortunes must crumble. A real democracy must be a federation of small self-sufficient, self reliant units and these existed in ancient India.\*

### *Leisure and Work*

When it is contended that the revival of the dead and dying industries of India and of the home crafts will relieve unemployment, the criticism of the Socialist is that work is not an end in itself and is worth pursuing only when it pays adequately but that the problem should be one of providing food and relief to

\* This aspect is dealt with in detail in the Chapter on the Indian village. (Ch. XI.)

all—thereby promoting leisure. Mr. L. P. Jacks' definition on leisure runs thus:

That part of a man's life where the struggle between white angels and black for the possession of his soul goes on with the greatest intensity.

The real difficulty is that leisure promotes certain idleness of mind and body which are at once turned into the Devil's workshop. It is sometimes said that the time may be divided into two hours' physical labour and six hours' intellectual labour. The question then will be whether the intellectual labour is pursued for profit or work for the nation. If it is pursued for profit, it will break down, unless the State pays him amply for the two hours' physical work which means according to Gandhi, State conscription. Continued physical work drives away idle thoughts. It is true that physical labour by itself is not an education even as mental labour is not. Where it is drudgery, it deadens one's finer instincts. In this view, the villager's life is worse than that of animals. Where there is no conscious joy in the work carried on, the occupation becomes more or less brutal in character. Work and culture must, therefore, be combined. Continued physical work coupled with this conscious joy of life especially through the creative arts never leads to mental decay and here the Indian craftsman scores over the machine labourer of the West.

A right issue in the right time carries a fight really far but a wrong issue diverts our course from the destination. We fight against capitalism and we ought to. This capitalism such as it is in India is largely created by Western Commerce behind which are the cohorts of the Western powers. In the measure in which we

assail Indian capitalism, in that measure repercussions of our attack affect the wider interests of the foreigner lying behind it. Therefore we antagonize the foreign ruler and create a motive for the rich man in India to join hands with the foreigner—ruler and trader alike. We are directly promoting an unholy alliance between the giant British capitalist and his pigmy Indian counterpart in order that they may jointly crush the socialist and the swarajist alike, who have all along come as the friends of the poor at a time when the poor really have stood to gain by an immediate relaxation, if not removal, of the incubus of foreign domination. Let not our methods, therefore, defeat our objects for thereby the third party's power is consolidated instead of being weakened. Is there not enough time and enough strength for the socialist to settle up affairs with the Indian capitalist after he has settled with the foreigner? Whether, in the fulness of time, the Socialist pursues Satyagraha or the time-honoured methods of social, economic and political struggle, his strength will be unassailable.

### *Indianise Socialism*

Let us Indianise our ideal of Socialism. Socialism is good and unchallengeable. We cannot any longer put up with the greed of the land-lord or the vagaries of his feudal hierarchy. We cannot for ever tolerate the distinctions of high and low related to birth, we cannot still agree to keeping a fifth of the population under bondage to the remaining four-fifth of their fellow creatures. We must dispel the demon of drink and destroy the monster of untouchability. But we must also ensure the poor victims of

these several evils a square meal throughout the year. Let us support the crafts and the arts of the village. What availeth it to the down-trodden poor if we raise loud cries of socialism and buy foreign or mill made goods every moment of our lives? Let us not bury our poor brethren with sympathy and slogans, but keep them alive by helping them earn a few annas, or even pies. The socialist will win the moment if he has a programme of day-to-day work which brings tangible relief to the poor. The common communist cry of "aggravate suffering in the starving in order to kindle in them a spirit of revolt and raise a revolution" is unreasonable, apart from being heartless. It is, therefore, a tragedy to witness socialist preaching against Khaddar and Village Industries and advising people to take to mill cloth or even foreign cloth. "Workers of the world, unite, for you have nothing to lose but your chains" is a splendid slogan, but what should we say if half the workers of the world are uniting to bind the other half with unbreakable chains of industrial and economic slavery? The Socialist means well, but let him do nothing which would make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Neither the Socialist nor the Congressman can make good except with the co-operation of the masses. And co-operation is but the outward expression of a feeling of confidence generated within. Let us do nothing which will impair the little confidence that we have created in the masses by long years of service and suffering. Slogans do not fill stomachs any more than votes and the power of Socialism duly co-ordinated to the traditions of the country and the foundations of society to which it is made applicable will be irresistible when its programme is a programme of action resulting in a tangible

alleviation of suffering and sorrow in the woe-begone homes of this ancient land.

### *Gandhism vs. Socialism*

If the object of Socialism is to grant equal opportunities to all; Gandhism has for its object the utilization of the time and opportunities that every one has for a noble end. If Socialism dis-establishes property by capital levy, heavy surcharges, expropriation, and force, Gandhism appeals to the age-long tradition of the nation which has exalted poverty above riches and learning above wealth. If Socialism invokes the intervention of the State for achieving its ends, Gandhism depends for its success upon the refinement of conscience and the development of culture of each citizen of the state. The results of Socialism imposed from without, spectacular as they may appear, are really uncertain and even hazardous, while those of Gandhism, small as they may be seen, take a firm and deep root in the affections of the people. Socialism has witnessed the sorry sight of its apostles becoming dictators in order to perpetuate their principles and power. Gandhism depends upon a voluntary acceptance of self-denial and has witnessed the rise of men like Gopaldas Desai—the Thakur of Rai Sangli and Durbar of Dhassa and a young man like the Raja of Kalakankar in U. P. who have accepted poverty and either renounced their wealth or used it for the poor. Socialism with the majority of people is a tendency and an attitude, but Gandhism is a stern actuality and a practical day-to-day programme of service and sacrifice. Under Socialism, the leaders tell other what they should do—under Gandhism, the programme pres-



cribes to each what he should do. Socialism seeks to promote humanity by appeal to the sense of bitterness. Socialism accumulates the food products of country where some areas are barren and redistributes them—Gandhism urges each man to produce his own food and clothing in a country which abounds in every variety of soil and surface and every type of climate and conditions. Socialism maintains cards of labour and forces every one to work for the State—Gandhism shows the beneficence to the world of each man and woman working with the traditions of each group of individuals. Socialism seeks to equalise the distribution of property in a society abounding in inequalities even in the family circle with its law of primogeniture—inheritance amongst the Hindus ensures equal shares to sons and in the Muslims equitable shares to daughters as well. Socialism may be the remedy to the distempers of the body politic in the West, but Gandhism is the interpretation of the structure and functions of society which the Rishis had fashioned thousands of years ago and which another Rishi is trying to rehabilitate, revivify and rejuvenate today. That is why Gandhi himself said at Karachi “Gandhi may die, but Gandhism will live for ever.”

Health, Wealth and Welfare of human beings constitute the best of human affairs. Their ordering is not effectuated by any dry formula but must be closely linked to a study of past achievement, present difficulty and future need. This is politics *par excellence*; call it a sound mind in a sound body, or call it a new social order, or call it even a communistic economic structure—all connote but one cardinal principle—the principle of duties before rights which regulates the edifice of Nationalism constructed with Truth as the

base and Non-violence as the crest.

People often ask whether judging from its contents Gandhism is not a failure. The answer is both, yes, and no. It depends upon the view exercised in judging the issue. If you do not get to the actualities of the world and judge from the stand-point of the ideals the real must always be claimed to be a failure. If the ideal is transformed into the real it cannot be a full success. The real must, therefore, be a dilution of the ideal and such terms as success and failure only represent that degree of the dilution. When it is very dilute, we say it is adulterated. When it is moderately we say it is a legitimate compromise. When, however, you spurn all these things, admit of no 'give and take' you proclaim it to be a failure. You must, therefore, be prepared for the various,—not merely compromises but,—surprises, and draw the line between the permissible and non-permissible impurities.

## II

### *Man and Machine*

The problem of modern life which lies at the root of all conflicts is whether man and machine are interchangeable factors of life or whether they are complementary. In other words, the question may well be asked whether the machine is meant to supplement human effort and subserve human need or whether it is to be designed and developed so as ultimately to supplant man's labours. They in the West regard the human body a machine, society a composite machine, and government a complex machine. To them man's interest is greatest in this study as he represents himself

the best engine yet invented where the coefficient of power is highest.

To-day, machine adds and subtracts, multiplies and divides, conducts railways, directs aeroplanes, regulates traffic, numbers pages, prints, folds and bundles newspapers, conveys messages, types news wired out from far-off cities. A new magic and mesmerism has pervaded life with telling influences on human emotion as well as human understanding because distant voices are heard, distant visions are seen. Captains of industry have sprung into existence overnight and huge amounts of wealth have been accumulated; outwardly a new fellowship appears to have been generated not merely between individuals but between groups of people and even of nations. But really a new monster has been brought into being, the monster of selfishness of which there is an *isomer*,—namely, the monster of competition. They have had their reaction upon commerce and economics and brought into existence the doctrine of Free Trade sponsored by Liberals of the mid-Victorian age. Labour which was employed as the up-builder of wealth soon became self-conscious and it brought into existence the Trade Union Movement, which has been further idealised into the Socialistic Movement and been perfected into the Communist Movement based upon violence ultimately. The machine has doubtless added considerably to the comforts of man but has brought in a stream, a host of evils, which have been ameliorated politically by franchise, economically by increased wages and by bonuses and socially by various insurances and benefits and doles. But none of these has served to stupefy the real producers of wealth. Strikes and locks-out, sabotaging and shooting have followed the development of

machinery as night follows day. When, therefore, we condemn the machine, we do not indulge in a superstition. What we really condemn is the over-powering mastery of the machine age, its developing attack on life, the thralldom it has imposed upon the village, the destruction of human skill and individuality, the promotion of a new individualism tending to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, the demoralization of homes and families throughout the country and finally the virtual state of perpetual war between nations which has become a stable feature of national life all the world over.

### *Gandhi on Machinery*

Gandhi has definite views on machinery and the Industrial civilization. He has dwelt at length and often on the "inhuman system of the British Government which has led to the oppression of the poor who stand out in miserable contrast with the ancient wealth and rich possessions of India, with the 'barbaric pearl and gold' of Milton." If to-day a fifth of the population is on the verge of starvation and the rest are ill-housed, under-fed and half-naked, these conditions are not in any way traceable to the absence of that bountiful Nature which had once provided food and raiment, and housing to every one of its teeming millions. The very structure of the Indian village as carved out thousands of years ago was a rendering of the Varnasrama dharma propounded and promulgated by the ancient Rishis who by maintaining a balance between power and wealth, ensured repose in society and made the village—the abode of that society self-contained and self-sufficient in respect of all normal needs of life. The

yokel raised their food crops, always consuming the crop of their raising, spun and wove, built and decorated, furnished and inhabited their abodes with that or privacy of home that the Indians cherish, that compactness of family life which they are ever loathe to abandon. The common cunning of the hand has yielded place to a new sense and skill but has abstracted millions of population from their village homes, their fresh fields and pastures old, their greenwood tree, their smithy, their anvil, their *last*, their wheel, their hammer and chisel, their health and happiness, their prosperity and contentment, their running brooks, and their invigorating atmosphere, their beloved cows and bulls, and sheep and goats, and fowls and ducks, their village-tanks and their little gardens,—on to congestion and creches, disease, distemper and drink, promiscuous labour and uncertain employment, in towns and cities which slave and sell for the capitalists of India or England, which no longer are the emporiums of the handicraft work of the craftsmen and the artisans of Rural India. That is not all; the corporate spirit has given place to the 'competitive ideal, the individualistic ambition has eclipsed the spirit of commonweal, so that the joint family is no longer the old co-operative society or the labour organization that it used to be but has become disrupted under the fissiparous tendencies created by the machine age.

In the reconstruction of Indian Nationalism, the plans that are put forward from time to time are but tenth rate imitations of the socio-economic structure of the nations of the West based upon capitalism and Industrialism—supported by and in turn supporting the policies and principles of what has compendiously come to be known as Imperialism—which is sustained

by the militarisms of Britain and Germany. That is why these two nations are perpetual rivals and therefore at war with each other. The Economists and Professors, the Ministers and the Politicians of India—who are all the products of the Western system of Education, have for decades, learnt to worship at the shrines of Professors Marshall and Fawcett, and have become ardent votaries of an Industrial Revolution in India as well. Accordingly they talk of national planning and time-planning as necessary factors of a rejuvenated India. In prescribing these patent remedies the socio-economic charlatans treat the symptoms of the disease, neglect the man afflicted by it and the principles which must regulate the treatment. It is not industrial progress alone that this quackery has come to prevail and make a bid for popularity. In the domain of education what we have witnessed up till to-day is a process of regimentation rather than education—all because the ornaments of the pedagogic profession are the products of a university whose systems are effete, outlandish and lopsided. Even in the domain of agriculture—which is the vocation of 67 per cent of the population, the departments of Government should have paid attention, as civilian Ramamurti (I.C.S.) has tersely pointed out, not merely to ‘plants and insects and animals in relation to soil and climate, also to the study of man in relation to his past history and present environment,’ “*I have sometimes said,*” he adds, “*the missing link in Indian agriculture is the man.*” Yes, the missing link is man not merely in agriculture, but also in education, industries and home crafts, in the very organisation of Government, in its objects and basal principle.

And the administration of all these departments

is directed towards the attainment of supremacy over the world's commerce and industries and the desire to make the balance of trade favourable to each nation. The progressive nations of the world have, therefore, been at perpetual war with each other. How can all the nations of the world have a favourable trade balance? If some have favourable balance, the balance of others must be unfavourable. If some parents receive dowries for their sons, there must be others giving those dowries because, they must marry their daughters. Is it ever possible for all the parents in the world to receive dowries? Who is to give them? Equally unthinkable is it for every nation to have a favourable balance of trade? Who is to give it? The struggle for raw-products and the quest of new markets have necessitated these wars and the very character of the wars has been changed. At least in the last European War, there were battles of position but to-day they are all aerial battles or naval battles. It is all bombing and black-out and blockade.

The direct costs of the last war, [we are told] "were estimated at 186,000,000,000 dollars and the indirect costs at 151,000,000,000 dollars thus arriving at the stupendous total of 337,000,000,000 dollars or roughly one lakh of crores of rupees. During that late war nearly 60,000,000 soldiers were mobilized and the combatants suffered 33,000,000 casualties of whom nearly 8,000,000 were killed or died of disease, nearly 19,000,000 were wounded and 7,000,000 taken prisoners. The greatest sufferer was Russia which had over 9,000,000 casualties while next in order came Germany with 6,000,000 and France with 4,500,000 casualties. The British Empire had 3,000,000 casualties. America's casualties were a trifle under 300,000. The total loss of life directly attributable to the war is probably fully 40,000,000. While if decreased birth rates be added the total would rise to nearly 50,000,000. A fact of melan-

choly interest is that for every soldier killed, the war took five civilian lives. The most tragic portion, however, lies in the fact that a summary of the unemployment bureaus in Europe will show that 15,000,000 families are receiving unemployment allowances in one form or other and were in the main being paid by constant inflation of currency. It has been estimated that the population of Europe is at least 100,000,000 greater than can be supported without imports, and therefore must live by the production and distribution of exports. Really we increase our output by the machine and the machine retorts by throwing us overboard.

It is not suggested that the Indian farmer and weaver, the Indian scholar and savant, the Indian purveyor and politician, should altogether deprive himself of the benefits of the machine age. If that were so, Gandhi's everyday life would be a veritable negation of his principles. He uses a torch-light, impresses into service the type-machine, drives in a motor, (and is not satisfied even with a speed of 40 miles an hour). The Railway, the Post and the Telegraph are his every day need. What Gandhi abhors is the conversion of man himself into a machine, an automaton, by being made part of and put on a level with a crank rod or a cotterpin, a toothed wheel or a brass bearing, for when a man works in a mill or a factory, he is no more conscious of his task than his inanimate colleagues of the machinery, he is no more creative than they. He is a part as much as any metallic part. He is a tool and at best he is a 'hand.' But the Indian craftsman and artisan have the job of the creative artists; owning their day's product themselves and not working for wages, pouring their whole soul into their task within the sanctity of their own homes, in the exhilarating company of their families, whose members are oftentimes his collaborators. The privacy of women is pre-



served and no promiscuous labour is enjoined on the working class.

### *The Indian Craftsman*

To the Indian craftsman his occupation is more a "calling" than a profession or trade for his aptitudes are really the criterion that settles his destiny. It is not as if the workman puts his hand to any work because it pays him but he must feel the urge within him and find his work congenial. Freedom from anxiety regarding the daily bread, a guarantee of the correct standard without unscrupulous competition and above all, the feeling that one's art is not being exploited for purposes of profit by middle men and capitalists and by the so-called patrons of art,—these constitute the bulwark of the Indian craftsman's age-long occupation. But more than all these, is the inner consciousness which invests one's task with a certain spiritual exaltation and social significance. To the Indian craftsman, hours of work and standards of wages are but Greek and Latin. He does not understand the language of the labour-movement of the present day. He is at liberty to come and go when he wills and do as much work as he fancies. He cannot deliver his work by units to a pay-master. And one who engages himself in such cultural pursuit always receives recognition of his position in society. For him is not the struggle for existence which as Sir George Birdwood says "oppresses the life and crushes the very soul out of the English working man." For him is not the deadweight of cares, for his is a religious function which ensures contentment of mind, a sense of leisure and more than these, a certain pride and pleasure in his occupation for

its own sake. These guarantee artistic excellence.

The craftsman's education covers the whole gamut of training from the stage of boy-hood to the stage of expert workmanship. The study of drawing is emphasised, the composition of colours and pastes and cement and mortar—is all taught not by formulæ from books but by day-to-day work in the laboratory of his master who in most cases is his father or his elder brother. It is not as if a medical student passes through a five years course in the Medical College without giving an enema or passing a catheter or making an injection. There is nothing amateurish or dilettante about the student-craftsman's education. The period of his apprenticeship is in his own home. He thus earns while he works and need not pay school fees and apprenticeship fee to an outside master or an institution. The *Silpa-Sutras* are there to guide the craftsman in regard to his particular craft. To the builder of a palace the breadth of the room is prescribed, the location of the windows is fixed, the base of the pillar is located in the space between the plinth and the ceiling. The height of the column, the place of the capital and of the beam have all been thought out correctly. A departure from such rules involves serious danger to the architect. The *Brihat Samhita* deals with this science of house-building. "The craftsman under such conditions is" as Ananda K. Coomaraswamy says, "not an individual expressing individual whims, but a part of the universe, giving expression to ideals of eternal beauty and unchanging laws, even as do the trees and flowers whose natural and less ordered beauty is no less God-given." The *Visva Karma* is the divine teacher of the Indian craftsman and in the words of the same author, the "beauty, rhythm, proportion, idea

have an absolute existence on an ideal plane, where all who seek may find." "The reality of things exists in the mind, not in the detail of their appearance to the eye." The craftsman's work is invested with a certain sense of mystery. It is more a sacrament than a profession. How else would you account for the prescription of the qualities of the character of a painter who according to an ancient work must be "a good man, no sluggard, not given to anger, holy learned, self-controlled, devout and charitable, free from avarice?" The Hindu craftsman worships his tools once a year on the festival day in *Dusserab* or the *Vighneswara Chaturdhi*. The craftsman is the first man to recognise that he is a member of a great fraternity called the caste which is a system of *noblesse oblige*. Each man is born to his ordained work, through which alone he can spiritually progress.

अयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

(Bhagavat Geeta 3-35)

Modern competition has destroyed ancient ideals and standards. The sudden demand for the products of the hand involving great skill and refinement, by reason of the push that has periodically been given through the patriotic impulses of people has only served, whether it be in Khaddar or in a great industry such as gold embroidery that flourished in Lucknow in olden days, to bring about a degradation of quality and standard by setting up competition emphasising the time element, the quality of cheapness and above all asserting the individualistic and irreligious concept

of rights.\*

Machinery, in its backstroke, has caused a stagnation of natural human talent, a cessation of the circulation of the life-blood of the nation, a distemper in the body politic, and an embarrassment to the heart of the people so that the national pulse does not beat in unison with the throb of the central impulse. A nation so disorganised will not take long to become diseased and ultimately die. India is already well on its way to such sad death. It is fortunate that before the last breath has become extinct Gandhi has descended much as an *avatbar* on a decaying world in order to destroy the evil of *wealth* and restore the good of *service*, to obliterate competition and rehabilitate co-operation, to drive out hatred and replant love in the human breast.

The ultimate effect of this back-stroke of machinery on society is that those nations which have hitherto been imperialistic in outlook and which have been prospering by dumping their goods upon the Orient and Africa, are now being fast thrown upon their own resources, for it is no longer possible for them to get these nations to accept their goods or to supply them with raw-materials. They have become self-conscious. This very revolt of the East no longer provides a suitable ground for any further exploitation. But when Japan has risen to the position of a successful competitor with the foremost industrial nations of the West, when China has thrown off the torpor of ages and India has become awakened to a new national self-consciousness, when Afghanistan and Persia have toed the line

\* In appendix two are given notes by Sir George Birdwood and Mr. Havell on the subject.

with the forward nations of the day and Palestine and Syria are fast surviving the recent onslaughts of the West and finally when Turkey has ceased to be the sick man of Europe, and Egypt the play-thing of foreign nations, the range and the chances have been reduced to their minimum in their field of exploitation. France is happily situated in occupying as it does a position in which she is able to balance her industrial and agricultural life, while Italy is still more agricultural than industrial, though she is fast making herself self-contained in those domains of her industrial activity where she had been found wanting. As against all these, Russia has fought a single-handed and successful battle, producing all her wants by an intensified plan of action, not merely making her machinery and mills, and blasts furnaces and cupolas, but rearing her rabbits to the tune of ten millions in the first quinquennium so as to oblate the import of meat. She has further barred, banged and bolted the door of foreign trade, reducing everything in that line to the minimum and that conducted through the State mostly for barter, and only when inevitable, for money.

Thus, have the nations of the West been obliged to make themselves self-contained, and as an illustration we read that Germany has to ration her commodities in the winter this year as her exports cannot pay for her imports. If, therefore, the nations of the West have lost their markets in the East and cannot sell their manufactures to one another, they must all become self-contained and self-sufficient and when that consummation happens, manufacture for export will cease, production for consumption remains, and people will not consent to make a single person the producer and themselves running into millions, the consumers,

building up for him profits, wealth and sky-scrapers and content with hovels and slums for themselves. When the large scale manufacturer ceases to exist, the labour out-look of the workers becomes gloomy, and the only remedy to unemployment will be a sharing of the profits of production by corporate, co-operative activities, or by a reversion to the ancient cottage industries. We are perhaps looking a little too far, but when we are visualising the destinies of nations and planning for a whole future, it were better to look a little too far, than to be myopic.

*Machine the Servant not the Master*

In effect then Gandhi would make the machine the servant of India not her master as in the West where it has become not merely a master but a tyrant—yea a monster, with appetite and thirst, with consumption and production on a truly monstrous scale. Mass production has led to cheapness which facilitates competition and not only tempts but compels a quest for markets to be satisfied only through political influence supported inevitably by militaristic supremacy. Thus mass production demands raw materials on the one hand and markets for outlet on the other and neither can be secured nor preserved except under a scheme of Imperialism which merely implies the industrialism of peace times and the militarism of war times—all through a play of unmitigated violence. That is why the machine industry is succinctly but significantly described as *violence in motion* while the constructive programme of the Congress with khaddar leading as the Prince of village industries, with communal unity, prohibition and removal of untouchability, is equally succinctly

and significantly describe as *non-violence in action*. What then is the character of the society visualized by Gandhi? Not certainly one of motor cars which raise a cloud of dust behind them and fling it into the eyes, mouth, nostrils and ears of those left behind, if perchance they are not trodden under its wheels. Nor is it a primitive or medieval society. He has visualized his ideal in his Broadcast address from London to America in 1931.

"In the broadcast address which he gave from London to America in 1931, Gandhi referred to the semi-starved millions scattered throughout the seven hundred thousand villages dotted over a surface nineteen hundred miles long and fifteen hundred miles broad." He said:

It is a painful phenomenon that those simple villagers, through no fault of their own, have nearly six months in the year idle upon their hands. Time was, not long ago, when every village was self-sufficient in regard to the two primary human wants—food and clothing. Unfortunately for us, when the East India Company, by means which I would prefer not to describe, destroyed that supplementary village industry, then the millions of spinners—who had become famed through the cunning of their deft fingers for drawing the finest thread, such as has never been yet drawn by any modern machinery—these village spinners found themselves one fine morning with their noble occupation gone, and from that day forward India has become progressively poor, no matter what may be said to the contrary.

### *In The West*

Let us for a moment step aside and study the progress of events in the West under the influence of machinery in relation to their conception of wealth and their conditions of employment. There, paradoxical

as it may seem wealth grows by destruction, unemployment has increased directly as the square of progress in labour-saving devices in mills and machinery. Agriculture has taken a place wholly subordinate to Industries and while England is 91% industrial and only 8% agricultural, nations like Italy and Russia, once predominantly agricultural, have strained every nerve during the past twenty years to compete with the Industrial nations. England, as we all know, grows, only five weeks food in the year and has to obtain for the rest of the forty seven weeks, its meat from New Zealand and Australia, its wheat from Canada, its eggs from Denmark, its milk and milk products from Holland and Belgium, its rice from Burma and India and its coffee from Ceylon. For all these it must pay through its coal and iron or through products manufactured with aid and with raw materials imported from abroad—cotton and cotton seeds, hides and skins, groundnut and cashewnut and so on. The lessons of the last European war were lost on Britain as soon as it was concluded. During the Great-war of 1914-18, the parks and hunting grounds and pastures of Britain were converted to a certain degree into arable land but as soon as the war concluded in 1919 that is between 1919-30, 2½ million of acres of arable land were allowed to revert to pasturage and went out of cultivation and England has to depend upon foreign countries for her food.

This large scale exchange of goods which has not been a self-complete transaction through international barter has necessitated the play of money as a proportionately large scale, the introduction of artificial standards of currency, coinage and exchange, the deflation and inflation of notes in circulation and a wholesale



uncertainty in the markets which are controlled not by the seasons or the production of crops, but by new seasons of a monetary origin and new production of currency notes. All production of goods has therefore been conditioned by a desire to capture markets and therefore been regulated by prices, so that however valuable the commodity, it is not its edible value that appeals to nations but its market price. To this end, strange and even paradoxical as it may seem, wealth has come to grow by destruction of property.

In 1926, we learned the Egyptians were asked to reduce the cotton acreage for three years to a 3rd of every plantation. And likewise, in 1927, the president of Cuba limited the sugar crop to 4½ million tons. While in 1931, Brazil destroyed 12 million bags of coffee amounting to 18,55,52,40,00 lbs. (18½ crores of pounds) and by the end of 1933, 22 million bags of Brazilian coffee had to be disposed off by burning or dumping into the sea. The cows of Jersey had to be artificially made dry in order to keep up the price of milk and the figs of Mexico were allowed to rot for a like reason. In the United States, the farmers have wheat but no fuel and burn their grain as fuel.\* When fruit growers agree to leave lakhs of bushels of fruit on the wines of the trees, when the Federal Farm Board urges ploughing down every 4th row of cotton and when there is a drastic reduction of wheat grown one would have thought that there was plenty in the land and unemployment was a chapter of past history. Let alone plenty for the people, have the unemployment figures at least gone down as the result of all these manipulations of the State under the stress of machinery?

\* Pages 39, 40 "Why Swadeshi?" by M. R. Agarwal.

In U.S.A. the producing capacity of machine-aided workers increased by 71% between 1919 & 1933 but during the same years the number of the unemployed rose from 1½ million to 12 million and "still better scientific knowledge" has added yet another 4 million to the unemployed rank.\*

India's unemployed come to 40 million: If agriculture is mechanised, more men will be thrown out of work and driven away out of village.† Unemployment is not inevitable but our whole system of economics, the labour-saving machinery, the daily improvements in the make-up of the Lancashire mills which are known only to the Birmingham Manufacturers,—the system of purely literary education in India all conspire to produce unemployment and ever so much more of it. It is really created by variations of markets in the world and manipulated by the manoeuvres in the currency and exchange policies, in tariffs and in Railway rates. It is not growth of population or too many workers that causes unemployment. Nor is it the advent of women into the domain of labour that causes unemployment. In America despite its republican and democratic ideals, its boast of anti-Imperialism, a third of its 130 millions of population are still ill-conditioned in regard to their food, raiment and housing. "Long ago, it seems a man was put into a Lunatic Asylum and he dreamed of the present day sanitary conditions of factories. So may we be considered lunatics in anticipating a new social order, while all the time singing the praises of machinery." Keep

\* Page 36 "Why Swadeshi?" by M. R. Agarwal.

† Page 37 "Why Swadeshi?" by M. R. Agarwal.

machinery within its limits. Let it not encroach upon the sphere of rural employment affecting chiefly food and clothing and there will be peace and plenty in the land. The struggle for existence will cease. The migration from villages to towns and cities, from the open air to slums and congested areas, from family life to wandering in streets and sleeping on roads—will all vanish. The standard of life is often sought to be raised. Under machinery it is only raised for the select few, it is compensatingly lowered for the helpless many. In India, the problem is doubtless one of raising the standard of life, but raising to the point of finding food, raiment and housing only. The back-stroke of machinery has created a congestion in the tissues, embarrassed and weakened the central heart of the village and put out of gear the whole arterial system that feeds the 35 crores of population. Dropsy in the legs and swelling of the face may give a certain seeming fullness to the human body, but that person who suffers therefrom, and equally that nation which suffers from a certain glut of wealth at one place and anemia at all the other places are on the high road to destruction.

Whatever advantages machinery may have—and they are numerous—it has enslaved the people, destroyed human skill, invaded the privacy of the home and disturbed the morals of the family, crippled the creative genius of the craftsman and killed his personality as well as independence. It has introduced international complications by rousing a sense of competition where the spirit of co-operation should have ruled their inter-relations and kindled a spirit of imperialism with its attendant horrors of industrialism and militarism. It has annihilated time and distance and has brought nearer the countries of the world but thrown

apart the nations one from the other. It has brought together the bodies but rent asunder the hearts and souls of the people. Worst of all, it has narrowed down the vision of Christianity and made it a hand-maid of Imperialism.

The socialist of the western type complicates the Indian problem by raising the question of leisure. In India, the workman pours out his soul into his work and does not regulate it by hours or wages. There is no problem of leisure here, for work and leisure are interchangeable terms. When the sculptor carves out of a rough stone, the marvellous and magnificent figures of Jaganmohini and Kesavaswami, he reveals in his work much as a swimmer swimming on the high tide of the ocean. In India work is leisure and leisure is work. Work is art, work is joy and recreation, work is the self-realisation of the artist and the repose of his soul. The problem in India is also how to find work for the leisure, not how to find leisure for the work man.

In England recently, representatives of more than 200 voluntary organisations, education authorities and industrial undertakings met and set up a committee to carry out a national survey on this problem of the use of leisure.

Sir Wyndham Deeds, who presided, said leisure was 'free time' in which people could do what they liked and become human beings instead of mere industrial drones. Working hours were shorter, but there were millions to whom leisure was a mere mockery.

Captain J. H. Blaksley, of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology, said that ninety per cent of the population was engaged in work below its mental capacity.

According to another speaker all, but ten percent of us are engaged in work which is below our mental capacity. Think what this means. Suppose a sixth form boy at school were

forced to work with fourth form; or suppose a qualified doctor of experience were compelled to spend his time as a medical student.

Any one who is alive must continue to learn, to progress, if he stands still in one place, something dies in him.

The mass production processes, after a certain length of time, have just this effect on a man. They deaden him, arrest his psychological worth. Yet, according to one speaker, young people are actually getting to like being slowly murdered in the way!

Some people are beginning to feel that the Machine is an evil thing. We don't think it is any more evil in itself than the Christmas reveller's bicycle. It is our fogged condition which is at fault. We don't realise what is happening to us.

What kills us is allowing the machine to push us over into the ditch. The no-work, no-pay rule makes our labours a soul-destroying drudgery and our leisure hours a farce.

And leisure? Ah, that is indeed something to be dreaded. Drug addicts must live in their dreams, not in reality. Better not give ourselves time to think. Besides, as St. Catherine said, too much meditation on an empty stomach is not a good thing, even for religious development. One had to eat, and to eat one must go on working.

### III

#### *Vicious Circles*

Under the circumstances of modern civilization, we emphasise upon money as against service and equation of time into money. Life has become a series of vicious circles in which cause and effect feed each other and a whole process of courting evils and finding remedies constitutes the programme from morn to eve and eve to morn. Time is money and its quickness of motion is essentially an art of modern times.

Quick motion raises a cloud of dust in the roads. To allay dust, roads are tarred, to find the extra expense, taxes and rates multiply. This leads to discontent and corruption. Both destroy the sense of fellow-ship and good-will and promote greed and covetousness, and bring us to the starting point. Again quick motion leads to accidents. To avoid accidents, subterranean roads are constructed. That again leads to increase in rates with all the aforesaid results.

Secondly, money takes the form of coinage or currency notes. Competition in manufactures destroys your exports. You lower your exchange value and capture the markets. It is as if you draw all the tank's water by an invisible perforation in the bund. When exchange weakens, exports doubtless rise but international debts due to others increase. Therefore, exchange is made once again to rise and exports fall. A dead-lock is created which leads to the disowning of debts as by France to America.

A third circle is created by the wars. Wars exhaust the gold of the fighting nations. They go off the gold standard. Gold apart from being a fiduciary reserve of currency notes is of value for balancing international trade. America and France have accumulated the gold. But those who have gone off the gold standard, have become formidable competitors to the American foreign trade. America's exports have declined and therefore she has to pay for her imports in gold and thus the accumulations exhausted themselves. Britain went off the gold standard in 1931 and provided a *fourth* circle.

She doubtless balanced her trade and her budget, attained a show of internal prosperity and her currency stood high in the markets; but a new danger arose.

The currency was linked to nothing and that left it open to the operation of speculators in the money market who could give it false values—higher or lower. That discarded national currency.

A fifth circle relates to the Bank rate. It is lowered, money is easy. Industries prosper but deposits are depleted. The glut of funds has given rise to want. Bank rate rises in order to restrict demand. In the meantime, an instalment of national debt falls due for payment and the bank rate is lowered below that of *paper* with the result that paper and securities are renewed at a lowered rate of interest. Once that is done, bank rate is raised.

A sixth circle is that England balances her budget by raising taxes which have reached the limit. There is a clamour for their reduction. Reduction disturbs the budget. If sterling goes too low, it is a sign of collapse, if it goes too high, it is a sign of feverishness leading to delirium and whether it be collapse or delirium, death ensues.

A seventh circle is provided by the Ottawa agreement. England wants to buy all her wheat from her Dominions. Russia was formerly buying machinery from Britain and was selling wheat to Britain. The agreement resulted in restricting British imports from abroad. Or take butter which is taken by England from within the Empire to the tune of £23,000,000 and from outside, of £24,000,000 (70 crores of rupees in all). She does not buy butter from Belgium and Holland, therefore she cannot sell goods to the Netherlands, and is badly hit in her export trade.

An eighth circle is provided by Britain's victory over Germany in the last war. Britain owed to the United States of America £2,282,000,000 payable dur-

ing a space of 62 years. German reparations amounted to £6,576,000,000 payable over a period of 58 years. Germany paid her dues in kind to France and thus cut off British exports to France. German work-shops were buzzing with work and labourers had plenty of wages and England's unemployment figures mounted up to the tune of eleven million immediately after the last war. It is these vicious circles that are sought by Gandhi to be converted into vital circles.

Politics is a big train in which the leader is the Engine driver who knows where to slacken and where to accelerate the speed, where to stop and when to start, where to attach bogeys and how to detach, when to carry passengers and when goods. The combination of the two makes the load heavy, the separateness makes the passengers impatient but impatience is better than starvation. Without 'goods' there is no commissariat. Thus does the leader march now fast, now slow, now in the express with N.C.O. and C.D. and now with the commissariat of goods—Harijan, Khaddar and anti drink and communal unity. The sappers and miners go forward and clear the jungle, cut the brush and hawthorn, lay the rails and construct the road. They perish in the march only to make the way of their successors smooth. Thus is a business sublimated and glorified into a gospel, thus is the hankering for gold chastened into a quest for God.





## PART V



## CHAPTER XI

### THE INDIAN VILLAGE

#### I

To convert *pararaj* into *swaraj* is the problem of India. What is the *parathva* in the Raj of to-day? Is it merely the charging of indigenous institutions with the spirit of the West or is it a replacement of all that is Eastern by all that is Western? In the prevailing condition of things, obviously, it is the latter, not the former, at any rate; it is more the latter than the former. Accordingly we are engaged in the task of reconquering India—every inch, every sphere of interest, every department of administration, every stratum of society. But the first and fundamental duty is to awaken people's minds to this new consciousness—really a new consciousness of old virtues, arrangements, adjustments, relations and ideals. A hundred and fifty years of foreign rule has accustomed people to the new ways and new organisation, new fashions and fabrics, new needs and luxuries. The individual has got the better of society, *rights* have replaced *duties*, the *immediate* overbears the *remote*, *policy* has eclipsed *principle*, *money* has taken the place of *service*. Haste and hurry, not leisure and thoroughness are the prime movers. Punctuality which might well have been a virtue has become an obsession—much to the detriment of soundness and perfection. Time has become the essence of

the contract, not loyalty to truth and correctness to tradition. "Cheap and nasty" is the admitted ideal of to-day, the very basis of machine industry in which the cult is embedded through centuries of experience. It is not until the nation is permeated with the spirit that lies at the back of these reversion to the ancient ideal of life that we can well and truly lay the foundations a Rural India.

We preach the cult of 'back to the land' and unabashedly pursue the professions of the city and the town. We expatiate upon the panchayats and practise in courts in an atmosphere of convention that is foreign to our country, of artificiality remote from the scenes of strife and dispute, of lying and perjury. We wax eloquent over the ideals of humanity and are not ashamed to wring out a few rupees from the already half-mad widow of a dying husband. We celebrate our marriages in the bottom flat while yet the corpse in the top storey is waiting to be cleared of the premises. We put our children to that very system of education which is soulless and mechanical while all the while we sing the praises of village industries and home crafts. We worship at the shrine of machinery that is destructive of life and livelihood in contrast with the lip service that we do to the need for helping the widow and the orphan. This contradiction of our lives must be realized by those that hold aloft the ideal of Rural India and spend their time and energy in urban areas.

What, therefore, makes possible the reconquest of our country on the lines indicated is a revulsion of feeling against the new conventions that have come into being, an open and fearless attack on the training that we are giving to our sons and even to our daugh-

ters. The tragedy, however, of the situation is that those whom we have exalted to the place and position of our Ministers, our Vice-Chancellors of universities, our professors and lecturers, our lawyers and doctors, our captains of industry and princes of commerce—they are the people whose philistinism we have to survive. We may not, therefore, hide our ideas or conceal our thoughts from these estimable folks. The process of reform may be really of the reverse type, for the need of the hour is to 'educate our masters,' very much the same that Robert Lowe said in the latter half of the nineteenth century when in England the franchise was widely extended. Only it is not the cultured few that educate the untutored many but it is the dumb millions that must educate the vociferous few who occupy positions of power in the halls of honour. The course of Rural India is, therefore, an uphill one and years after the English leave the shores of India, the task of recovering our culture, and resuscitation of our civilization, will shape work enough for the hands of the generations in the immediate future of *Bharatavarsha*. But, to-day, the key to the understanding of the problem is in the awakening of mass consciousness to the cardinal issue involved in the problem; once that is done the solution will follow as a matter of course.

## II

### *The Indian village—Its Organization*

In order to understand the exact position and significance of village organisation in modern India under Swaraj, it would be just as well to take back our minds to a study of how this village organisation pros-

pered a century and a quarter ago and a study of the subject is greatly helped by the following extract from the Judicial Despatch from the Court of Directors, dated 20th April 1814. It shows how the Indian village had remained intact from the age of Manu on to the present day and was only disturbed by the ryotwari system introduced into some of our provinces.

Colonel Munroe in his Report from the Ceded Districts of the 15th May 1806 informs us that every village with its twelve ayangadues is a kind of little Republic, with the potail at the head of it, and that India is a mass of such Republics. The inhabitants during war look chiefly to their own potail, they give themselves no trouble about the breaking up and division of kingdoms, while the village remains entire, they care not to what power it is transferred. Wherever it goes, the internal management remains unaltered. The Potail is still 'the Collector and Magistrate and Stud Farmer. From the age of Manu until this day, the settlements are made either with or through the potails; and in another of his interesting and valuable Reports, he informs us 'that whoever rules the province they rule the village.' This description of the village Societies of India is confirmed by the view which your Board of Revenue took of the same interesting subject, in their Report of the 25th April 1808.

A village, geographically considered, is a tract of country comprising some hundreds or thousands of acres of arable and waste land; politically viewed it resembles a corporation or township. Its proper establishment of officers and servants consists of the following descriptions.

The *Potail*, or head inhabitant who has the general superintendence of the affairs of the village, settles the disputes of the inhabitants, attends to the Police, and performs the duty, already described, of collecting the revenues within his village; a duty which his personal influence and minute acquaintance with the situation and concerns of the people renders him best qualified to discharge. The *Curnam*, who keeps the accounts of cultivation, and registers everything connected with it, the *Talliar* and *Totie*, the duty of the

former, appearing to consist, in a wider and more enlarged sphere of action, in gaining information of crimes and offences and in escorting and protecting persons travelling from one village to another; the province of the latter appearing to be more immediately confined to the village, consisting among other duties, in guarding the crops, and assisting in measuring them, the *Boundaryman* who preserves the limits of the village, or gives evidence respecting them, in cases of dispute, the *Superintendent of the tanks and water-courses* distributes the water therefrom, for the purposes of agriculture, the *Brahmin*, who performs the village worship, the *Schoolmaster* who is seen teaching the children in the villages to read and write in the sand, the *Calendar Brahmin* or astrologer, who proclaims the lucky or unpropitious periods for sowing and threshing, the *Smith and Carpenter*, who manufacture the implements of agriculture, and build the dwelling of the ryot, the *Potman* or potter, the *Washerman*, the *Barber*, the *Cow-keeper* who looks after the cattle, the *Doctor*, the *Dancing Girl*, who attends at rejoicings, the *Musician* and the *Poet*,—these officers and servants generally constitute the establishment of a village; but in some parts of the country it is of less extent. Some of the duties and functions above described being united in the same persons, in others it exceeds the number of individuals who have been described.

Under this simple form of municipal government, the inhabitants of the country have lived, from time immemorial. The boundaries of the villages have been seldom altered; and though the villages themselves, have been sometimes injured, and even desolated, by war, famine, and disease; the same name, the same limits, the same interests, and even the same families have continued for ages. The inhabitants give themselves no trouble about the breaking-up and division of kingdoms; while the village remains entire; they care not to what power it is transferred; or to what sovereign it devolves; its internal economy remains unchanged; the *Potail*, is still the head of the inhabitants and still acts as the petty judge and magistrate, and collector or renter of the village.

In addition to the portions of land appropriated to the



pagoda establishment, to the local officers of Government and to the village servants, they each were entitled to certain small shares or perquisites from the crops of the villages which were allotted to them, generally before, but sometimes, subsequently, to the division of the produce between Government and the cultivator. Provision appears to have been also made, in the mode last described, for the maintenance of public servants incapacitated by age or accident from the discharge of their duty. The fund of these disbursements in which the several classes of Revenue officers and village servants likewise participated, as one of the sources of their official emoluments, was the sayer or inland duties, and the sea and land customs.

We have in India 18 types of craftsmen spoken of. The Parsis have 32 types and the Parsi Fires are 33 in number—32 belonging to the 32 crafts of life and the 33rd, natural fire from a lightning—such a fire was brought by the original Parsi immigrants a thousand years ago to India. Let us try to enumerate the thirty-two craftsmen:—

1. Carpenter, 2. Smith (Iron), 3. Smith (Silver), 4. Smith (Gold), 5. Potter, 6. Chuckler, 7. Dhobi, 8. Dyer, 9. Printer, 10. Tailor, 11. Tinker, 12. Farmer, 13. Priest, 14. Physician, 15. Barber, 16. Sexton, 17. Painter (Muchchi), 18. Mason, 19. Curnam, 20. Munsiff, 21. Merchant, 22. Toddy tapper, 23. Astrologer, 24. Spinner, 25. Scavenger, 26. Dancer, 27. Singer, 28. Weaver, 29. Watch (er), 30. Water Controller, 31. Wrestler, 32. Jadugar.

### *A peep into our villages*

Let us for a moment stray into our villages and examine their past and present position as the result of this new leaven introduced into society. The village was till recently a corporate unit and even now it is so in a sense. There may not be common production or

community of interest to the extent to which they existed some centuries ago, but the village continues to be a self-contained and self-reliant unit of nationalism, which must be preserved and perpetuated if the Indian nation should preserve its individuality and integrity. One may correctly call the Indian villages a *miniature cosmos* which gets most of its needs within its precincts. It has as we have seen its carpenter, smith and its house-builder and jeweller, its cobbler and farmer, its barber and washer-man, its merchant and money-lender, its spinner and weaver, its priest and physician. What would it matter if the village were isolated for a time? Food and clothing—the fundamental needs of man are readily found there. Contact with other villages is only for social amenities. Contact with towns has but drained into them the wealth of the village through the lawyer, the doctor and the commission agent, and from towns the flow is to the cities and from cities across the seas to continents beyond. In olden days too, we had our cities but they were the emporiums of the artistic crafts of India and served as the marts for the caravans of the world. We gave to the world our best products and did not depend upon the external world for our food or clothing. Alas, the whole complexion of things has changed! We have become but hewers of wood and drawers of water and India has been converted from a premier civilized nation, yea, from a land flowing with milk and honey into an out-house of England.

All this has been brought about by the silent and imperceptible efforts made by the British to conquer the minds and capture the hearts of the nation. Since the Great Indian Mutiny so-called failed, the British were sure that that would not be the last attempt by the

Indians for recovering their independence. So, the very next year of the Mutiny, i.e., in 1858 they planted the Universities in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, established High Courts in 1860 and the Legislatures in 1861. These three institutions,—colleges, courts and councils, began to attract popular attention and became the guarantors of British domination in India. The English language came to stay. All instruction was imparted in English, all examinations were conducted in English. The very officers transacted their business in English. The Law-Courts administered justice through English. English Law was imported into this country. Although the plaintiff and the defendant, the counsels of both sides, the judge, the jury and the witness are all Gujerati, or Telugu, yet the witness is examined in English through a translator and the judgments are drawn up in English. The oath taken in the courts is considered to be not an undertaking to speak the truth, the whole truth, nothing but truth, but as a license to speak untruth the whole untruth and nothing but untruth. Courts which are stationed tens of miles away from scenes of offence or of dispute have come to be regarded as gambling houses, as places where it is open to anybody to speak untruth and escape scotfree. Facts of human experience, daily observations of actualities, are openly denied in these courts and the right of unending appeals has introduced a certain speculation into their transactions. A whole class of litigants has come into being whose profession is law touting. Litigation has come to be a means of vendetta far more severe in its effects than an outright duel. Slow torture is what litigation means by the rich to the poor. All this must be changed under Swaraj. The Panchayat must come into

existence. The Village Panchayat must be capable of looking after sanitation as well as co-operation and the administration of justice. It must look after the forests and the irrigation channels. It must run a library. It must revive the village arts and crafts. It must be a co-operative store. It must be a 'multipurpose' society having the various beneficent objects enumerated. It may be that one Panchayat will not be able to do all these at once. In that case, more than one must be brought into being. In any case, so far as the judicial functions are concerned, appeals must not be ordinarily permissible except on a certificate by the Government pleader.

### *The Village Panchayat*

One objection to the organisation of the Panchayat is that the village people are factious and party ridden. It is true that there is plenty of factiousness in the villages but all this has been permeated and fostered by the system of law and law-courts which are prevailing to-day. The profession of the lawyer is not to bring unity but to create division. The purpose of the court is not to administer justice but to administer law. Justice to become popular must be quick, cheap, and sure. This is possible with a Panchayat. The very existence of the Magistrate courts and the possibility of filing criminal charges has promoted litigation civil and criminal, and made it an instrument of torture. When the law reports are burnt, when case law is given up, when appeals are wholly limited, then comes a new era. The integrity of the spoken word will be restored, when justice will be administered by half a dozen compeers in the scene of offence or of

dispute, when the elders can give evidence without trouble and when public opinion of the village can operate effectively so as to put down all lying. It is lying that feeds litigation and when lying is controlled, litigation is obliterated. The Panchayat is the only agency that can undertake this business. During the transitional period, we shall meet with reverses even as we are meeting in Provincial Autonomy, in the administration of our District-Boards and Municipalities, in the organisation of our village industries, in planning our national education and in regard to the Harijan movement,—these are inevitable.

India has to be reconquered anew. Every department is to be reorganised. Every aspect of national life must be re-aligned. The subject of National education is dealt with in a separate chapter. Mere change of hands in the bureaucracy or in the professors, judges and administrators, or even in the ministry will not give us Swaraj. It is the change of heart, it is the change of purpose, it is the change of outlook that will work out our new Swaraj in all its glory and make our villages once again self-sufficient. This is what Gandhism aims at.

### *Opponent View*

Let us investigate whether our ancients lived merely in villages. It is said that historical evidence is against it. There is a definite school that avers that they do not wish that cities should go down, on the other hand, that villages must grow into cities. Cities no doubt have, they admit, congestion, dirt and commission trade and doubtless, the villagers must stay in villages without coveting money or looking to cities.

but that would only be, they assert, a kind of inertia. It is not the ideal state of human life. It is the bliss of ignorance.

“What will such a village do for self-defence?”—they ask,—whether it be against foreign powers or internal disorder. The villages, they hold, must be able to develop into cities. We do not accept the view that the ancient rulers minded the village only. It is true that we are a ‘village country,’ but our villages were also great exporters to cities of various articles of trade in ancient times. We admit that it is as wrong to say that our country is a country of villages and not of cities as it is to say that our country is populated by *sanyasis* or *sadhus*. That the Rishis built *asrams* in forests does not prove the greatness of the village. There were villages, forest and cities. But to say that *Gramya* is a word of censure as opposed to *nagarika* which connotes culture or *Samskara* does not prove that the city was superior to the village in morals or culture. The *grama* might have been and is, indeed, even to-day wanting in those external refinements which the cities abound in. The school referred to further holds that it is but natural that looking to the evils of cities we may cling to villages. Like Rousseau turning to nature-worship and infant simplicity, say they, we may revert to the past but it gives a false perspective though it may help us in infant education. It helps us to discern the beauties of *Prakriti* with the eye of a *Rishi*. But really by looking back to villages, do we not see clearly the grave and unendurable injustice we have done to them, as the result of which the Indian village has crumbled down? By inviting attention to this aspect, we shall be helping to dispel the darkness of the villages but the ideal of intellectual view in life should not be

like a swing between two untruths. We must catch truth at the very point where it shines and start thought and action. In replenishing the village we do not destroy the city, for then we would be cutting the head and standing on the feet. *Really* healthy villages nourish cities not by making the latter the emporia for the sale of the village products. And *really* patriotic cities—those that really mind the good of the country, do not suck the life-blood of the village. But they from their overflowing prosperity, replenish the village. The fault of the cities at present is that they merely import foreign goods for the consumption of the villages. But conversely the crafts of the village must decorate the palaces of the city. The city may be the exporting centre of the produce from the handi-craft factories of the country.

It is now generally admitted that social problems can't be left to mere drift. They must be studied and their solutions planned—preferably on co-operative principles so as to ensure a conscious effort and good will as the basis of mutual relations. The element of compulsion that must penetrate the organization in the earlier stages would disappear when what was compulsory at one time becomes natural, inborn and instinctive even as the process of walking in a child does. It is thus that the joint family has come to represent a co-operative society, that caste has become a co-operative federation, that the village a co-operative colony comprising labour organized on universal effort, commerce based on barter and peace ensured through mutual good-will.

Village reconstruction should be village enrichment effectuated by cutting off imitation by the villagers of the town-folk. The courts and colleges estab-

lish this contact. They must be recast. Justice as well as culture and industry must be taken to the villages even as politics has already travelled to them. They become new centres of thought and activity divorced from the tyranny of the new-fangled ideas.

Marx stated, "The Social Revolution consisted in the destruction of the old feudal order. 'It swept away the Hindu Spinner and Weaver.' " Marx was not so romantic with the *Village Communities*. According to him they are—

the solid foundation of Oriental despotism. They restrained the *human mind* with the smallest possible compass making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies.

At the same time Marx did not deny the suffering caused by this social revolution in destroying the idyllic village.

### III

#### *Self-Sufficiency*

In order to understand this ideal of self-sufficiency it is necessary for us for one moment, to survey the structure and functions of Hindu Society and see how its supports and safeguards, which ensured food and raiment to every member thereof, have been ruthlessly destroyed. To-day we find India cut up territorially, communally as well as professionally. The States are pitted against Provinces, the Hindus against the Mohammedans, Sikhs, Christians and domiciled natives of India, the towns against villages and urban labourers against rural peasants. But this is the least of the fissiparous mischief that has been done to this ancient



land. The very foundations of society have been destroyed imperceptibly. It has become fashionable to talk of self-sufficiency following the example of Germany. Some of the provincial satraps of India have begun to talk of it glibly. But it has been little realized that this very self-sufficiency has been made the basis of Indian society for centuries, the village being made the unit of national life—and a village of what composition? It is a village encompassing all the professions that make life full and enjoyable. All the crafts and professions that make for utility as well as beauty in life are represented therein. But the village of such a character and its magnificent products unfailing means of employment and guarantees of the primal needs of life, have been destroyed by one touch of Western civilization through the petty and wholesale shops that have sprung up or through the pedlar and the hawker that infest the remotest corners of the country, with cheap and the tawdry wares of the West. In the aggregate the village barber using the German razors, the village carpenter using the imported wire nail have destroyed the smith's trade in the villages. The smith wearing the foreign cloth has destroyed the weaver's craft. The weaver wearing the Japanese shoe has destroyed the cobbler's calling, cobblers using the enamel plate and mug have destroyed the potter's profession, the potter frequenting the laundries that use bleaching powder has destroyed the dhoby's vocation. Each is thus destroying his (neighbour's means of livelihood, and the whole village in effect is destroyed and when the village is destroyed, there can be no self-sufficiency,—rural or urban, there can only be national incompetence and widespread unemployment—problems which confront the Social-

ist of today,—problems too, which have grown acute and almost insoluble in Western countries with the rapid growth of industrialism and militarism and their culmination in the great world-war of the recent past followed up by a greater world war now on. It will be thus seen that corporate good and commonweal which once were the basis of Hindu society, have yielded place to individual struggle, mutual competition, unending conflict, followed by unscrupulousness and a debased national character.

India has had an ancient social organization in which each tract of country—each village, as has been seen is self-complete. Such an organization has been destroyed by the onslaughts of Western Industrialism. Western Industrialism is based upon mass production and competitive prices. For this purpose the world's markets are the bone of contention between rival Industrial nations. This was one of the causes of the last European-war and is one of the causes of the present World-War. The markets desired by the Western Industrial nations are all found in the East. The East has become self-conscious and conscious of the subtle slavery to which it has been subjected. The Eastern nations have revolted against this invasion of their markets by foreign goods—from Japan to Egypt. Therefore two things must follow, the Eastern nations must expand their own production and contract their own wants. The Western nations must contract their production and expand their own supplies of food and raw material. Thus both the trains on the great Eastern and the great Western Railways are bound to approach each other—they are for the time being moving in opposite directions. In this, the East must set the example to the West. The West won't learn except

by its own bitter experience and the West has passed through its bitter experience and begun to learn. Once the fundamentals are grasped, there is no point in delaying the working out of details. In India the great national organisation to undertake the task is the Congress. The first beginnings, of national reconstruction were made when the cult of Khaddar was inaugurated by the Congress. Few people expect the indigenous cloth to drive out the foreign cloth from the Indian markets. This has nearly been accomplished. An awakened national consciousness is an awakened conscience really and is a mightier force than laws, tariffs, quotas, boundaries subventions, and depreciated currencies. Khaddar is the prince of village industries. It has done its work—but as a forerunner of a Renaissance, it must help the other village industries also to raise their head. That is the work undertaken by Gandhiji at the bidding of the Congress—through the All-India Village Industries Association.

## CHAPTER XII

### ECONOMIC UPLIFT

*Khaddar*

Alone amongst the countries of the world does India, peopled by a sixth of the world's population and boasting of a hoary civilization, present the spectacle of being taught, clothed and governed by an alien power. Here in India, a mighty Oriental nation of ancient repute, stands arrayed against a puny modern island which, however by the force of its arms, by its adventurous spirit, by its diplomacy, by the geographical pressure for food, by the historical force of circumstances and by sheer struggle for existence has managed to establish an empire on which it is said "the sun never sets."

People, however, do not know the elementary fact that once this country clothed itself exclusively with hand-spun and hand-woven cloth. They do not realise that the East India Company had come into this country in order to gather cloth manufactured in the coastal towns where they had started "factories" which only meant "depots" or "godowns" as we now call them, because there were no engines or factories in the modern sense at that time. There was no steam-power in the year 1632. All the cloth used to be gathered and stored in these depots and taken to England for profitable trade and when interdicted therefrom, taken to

other countries for sale. They derived huge profits amounting to 300% over the cloth taken from this country and the cloth which at one time used to be spread upon the floor of rich houses in England soon came to adorn the loins of the queens and people mocked at the trading company which had thus brought down the purchase of national goods in England. Later on when Murshidabad silk began to invade English society and when the English squires and knights and barons used to dress themselves in silk suits, Daniel Defoe twitted them saying that they were strutting about in their own country in suits made of Murshidabad silks, not knowing how adversely that was affecting the trade of England, their own motherland.

It is well known that in the year 1700 a Law was passed penalising every Englishman who wore Indian silk by fining him £5. In 1735 a law was passed penalising every Englishman who sold Indian silk by fining him £25. Nay, they went further in England and passed a law that anybody who draped a corpse, in England in a shroud made of material other than wool should be fined £5. They imposed tariff duties in order to counteract the import of Indian silk into England. Thus they protected their own country from the invasion of foreign cloth and in the meantime the steam-engine (1783) was invented and power was applied to the weaving loom as well as spinning jenny. That achieved results far more potent and far more marvellous than any achieved by the tariff-policy of Government.

Manufacture of cotton cloth began to increase in England for mills make cloth not by yards but by bales. They are monsters whose food must run into hundred-

weights and tons, not into pounds and tolas merely. And, for the first time cloth began to be imported into India in the year 1803 when there was only 3 lakhs worth of cloth, in 1829 it was 29 lakhs worth of cloth while in 1929 it was 66 crores of rupees worth of cloth and 6 crores worth of yarn. That is how India has become a happy market for Lancashire and other countries. The British Empire in India meant accordingly not the Empire established by law and order, by the land revenue system and by a system of university education, or by courts, colleges and councils or by the titled aristocracy, but by Lancashire and its power spinning and power weaving.

The principle therefore of giving a national non-official bounty to cloth lay embedded even in the resolutions of the Moderates of the Congress which held sway from 1908 to 1915. And in recent years handsome grants have been made to the tune of 15 lakhs a year by the Central Government for supporting and consolidating the hand-weaving industry. The Congress and the All India Spinners' Association which is the accredited body of the Congress for the manufacture and distribution of Khaddar have gone one step further in demanding hand-spun yarn as well and have laid down certain rules as fundamental to the development of this industry. They have virtually defined Khaddar not only as cloth manufactured on the handloom with handspun yarn but also as cloth in the manufacture of which every artisan, be he a carder, spinner, weaver, printer, dyer or bleacher, receives a prescribed wage. Therefore whatever may be the legal definition of Khaddar, the political definition which is also the economic definition is that Khaddar is such cloth as has been manufactured by artisans, receiving a wage re-

cognised or prescribed by the A. I. S. A. That is why we exhort the public to buy only cloth from the certified shops.

*Spinning Wheel, a Machine*

A common criticism levelled at the revival of this ancient craft is that in this age of machinery it puts the hand of the clock back—but as Gregg points out very aptly, it does nothing of the kind, but starts the clock again. The spinning wheel is itself a simple machine, carried to the door of every home. The problem in India is,—“should we take Industry to the villager or the villager to Industry” as Barker pertinently asks. The latter means mill labour. The former means the spinning wheel. The wealth that makes a nation really strong and not merely rich is the opportunity for industry, intelligence, and well-being of its labouring population. The country is really of the poor men as the great majority must always be everywhere. This is the essence of Gandhi's preaching. He has all along exhorted the nation to get rid of the delusion that right is in any way dependent on race or colour and not on inward virtue. The cardinal point is that the only way in which to fit men for freedom is to make them free, the only way to teach them how to use political power is to give it them. Indeed, it is his firm belief that equality and freedom cannot be conferred on any man or nation. If they are capable, their title is from God and not from their oppressors or opponents. Gandhi's spinning wheel is but the symbol as Ernest Barker has said (P. 61, M. Gandhi)

“of his understanding of the homely and intimate necessities of his country's life.”

Through the operation of this wheel and the handloom that it feeds, it is possible to cover, as Gregg calculates, from one-fifth to one sixth of the total cost of living, in respect of millions of families. India is a country which compels unemployment for wellnigh a third to a half of the year, to a third of its population which works in field and forest. Gandhi has challenged the civilized, the scientific, the machine worshipping world to produce an alternative source of income to these vast, unnumbered millions which will yield them one to two annas a day. And so long as the challenge is not answered his claim to be the greatest economist of the age must remain undisputed. Gandhi is not a victim to mere superstition or old conservatism or blind hatred of Western science. He has a great bias for science and does nothing, accepts nothing, trusts nothing which does not appeal to his scientific sense. He probes matters to their very depths and rejects any hypothesis or theory on their failure to accommodate all the facts of his knowledge or explain all his doubts. There is a scientific perfection and exactitude in his handling the very Charka which has been contemptuously derided as unscientific. He has effected notable improvements in its structure and productivity without adding to its complexity or taking it beyond the reach of the villager for repairs. The Yerawada Charka may well be put forward as proof of Gandhi's partiality for scientific precision and efficiency. Meeting the charge that Gandhi is almost the *antithesis* of a scientist R. B. Gregg expatiates on the subject and we make no apology for extracting the relevant paragraph from Mr. Gregg's contribution to Mahatma Gandhi—(Sir S. Radhakrishnan, p. 80.)



*Gregg's Testimony*

He is a social scientist because he follows social truth by the scientific method of observation, intuitional and intellectual hypothesis, and experimental test. He once told me that he considered Western scientists not very thorough because not many of them were willing to test their hypotheses on themselves. He, however, always makes the first test of an hypothesis on himself, before he asks anyone else to try. That is so, whether the hypothesis relates to a matter of diet, sanitation, spinning-wheel, caste reform, or Satyagraha. The title he chose for his autobiography was *My experiments with Truth*.

He is not a mere scientist: he is a great scientist, in the realm of social truth. He is great because of his choice of problems, because of his methods of solution, because of the persistence and thoroughness of his search, and because of the profundity of his knowledge of the human heart. His greatness as a social inventor is shown by the close adaptation of his methods to the culture and modes of thought and feeling of the people and to their economic and technological resources. This greatness is also shown, I think, by his discrimination in choosing what to try to discard and what to try to conserve. Again, it is shown by the rate at which he applies and pushes reforms. He knows that in any society there is an organic rate of change peculiar to it at that stage. He knows that while certain processes long in gestation may come suddenly to birth, other changes will require at least three generations to bring about the complete change, to slough off old inherited habits and attitudes and master the new with its major implications. Another mark of his greatness in social invention is that whenever he proposes a social reform he creates an effective organization to accomplish it. He is a master of all the details of both organization and administration. The results of his work in numerous fields have already proved him surpassingly great, and history will, I believe, prove his greatness in places where his work has just begun.

Gandhi's cult of Khaddar and Swadeshi only embodies in a practical programme for India what, long years ago Abraham

Lincoln had stated on the economics of Swadeshi:—

“I do not know much about tariff but I do know this much:—

‘When we buy goods abroad we get the goods and the foreigners get the money; when we buy goods made of home we get both the goods and the money.’”

### *Constructive Programme and Satyagraha*

Gandhi has, in his latest campaign of Satyagraha (1940 Nov.) once again emphasised the constructive programme. He has taken particular care to see that neither Vinoba Bhave's arrest nor Jawaharlal's is taken as signal for disobedience of any character. It would be against his expressed instructions and therefore cannot be called civil. He has explained that the best response that the masses could give, would be by devoting themselves with greater zeal to constructive work. To whatever district we go, the chapter of its ancient history published by the British Government from the days of the East India Company onwards to the present day shows how Khaddar, which after clothing the people of the place was being exported by the East India Company, has completely disappeared from the districts. In East Godavari the figures are very illuminating. There was in 1803 and later years an export of 15 lakhs of rupees annually of Khaddar from the ports of Koringa, Komaragiriapatnam, Nilapalli and so on. These exports fell from 15 to 10 lakhs by 1825, to 2 lakhs in '45 and zero later. The villagers are well aware of these facts. They realise that their poverty is due to the decline of this foreign trade and its replacement by counter-trade in the very fabrics which were being exported by themselves. The flow of the

current of money is reversed. The rivers that join the sea taking their fresh waters into the salt water of the sea are all filled with sea water flowing back into their mouths. The village people have no fresh water to drink. They have to take the salt water of foreign cloth.

We have further explained how out of 632 crores of yards of cloth now required by India, 410 crores of yards are being manufactured by indigenous Indian mills and only 152 crores of yards by handloom with mill yarn. Foreign cloth imported is 70 crores of yards. Khaddar stands at a distance with 1½ crores of yards to its credit. Thus the sum of 44 crores of rupees, saved by cutting down Lancashire imports, has not travelled to the villages but has only served to swell the wealth of the wealthy and make the rich richer and the poor poorer. The villages have not been benefited by the stoppage of foreign cloth. It is the cities that have been benefited. This fact also is well realised by the villagers. There is a craving everywhere for the resuscitation of the cloth industry in all its stages from carding to slivering, spinning and weaving. The surprise created by Gandhi limiting the Satyagrahic movement to two people in the first instance, has sharpened the creative energy of the nation. It seeks to channel along the course of spinning. Everybody wants to revive the spinning wheel.

### *General popular upheaval*

The women of certain towns (Masulipatam) 50 Musalmans and 150 of other communities who are plying their charkhas are now earning a decent wage; some of

them are receiving up to Re. 0-15-3 per week for the yarn produced by them. If a woman can sit in her own house and earn Re. 0-15-3 a week, India's income is very nearly doubled. In this town under the series of the campaign of Satyagraha, a thousand wheels are running.

To make one's own slivers and spin them is to prepare one's own food at home and eat it. Slivers bought in the market are full of specks, dust and air and therefore won't spin; nor are slivers sold in the market. We have all American and European goods in our bazaars but not a viss of cotton for slivering nor a viss of slivers for spinning. We have, therefore, a duty laid upon us. Thousands of spinners are now coming for good cotton and slivers. What shall we do? Ginning and cleaning and slivering and carding are essentially occupations of women or of young boys. We have a few women teachers already trained but they are not sufficient to serve the whole area. Wherever we go, people ask for facilities to train their women; and pending arrangements for such instruction, we may well adopt a simple scheme in which the boys of Harijan Schools or other indigenous and unemployed boys may learn the craft from cleaning to spinning within a month and acquire the competence to earn 4 annas a day. This is not a small matter. Harijan boys in hostels are laboriously pursuing in district headquarters and elsewhere, the same literary studies that have created the problem of unemployment in the educated amongst the "sawarnas." For fear that the "sawarnas" may mistake our sympathy we are allowing them to go along the same path of aimless education, which qualifies them for unemployment. It is high time that the Harijan Sanghs, revised their

idea so as to direct the energies of boys and girls to think along the channels that will pay and provide employment. Such is carding and slivering today. After one month's training, boys and girls will be able to earn about Rs. 7 to 8 per month or even more. But more than the earnings of the boys and the girls, a supreme need is to be supplied for the people of the villages who stand in want of good slivers. In due course, they themselves will earn the art. Fifty lakhs of looms have been thrown out of work by foreign cloth. These feed ten crores of wheels and perhaps a quarter crore of carders, besides half-a-crore of dhubis and dyers and printers and a further half-a-crore of many other artisans, whose occupations are collateral to the occupation of weaving. Thus India by clothing herself by handmade cloth would provide occupation for 12 crores of people at once and the capital required is from As. 4 to Rs. 3 for each artisan according to the nature of his art and craft.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the fact remains that all growth of civilisation inevitably makes for the increase of unemployment. In the United States of America, we have been told that as the producing capacity of machine-aided workers increased by 71% between 1919 and 1933, the number of the unemployed has risen from 1½ million to 12 millions. That is to say 800% and increasing scientific knowledge has added at another 4 million to the unemployed. In other words, the advance of civilisation has increased the unemployed by 1250%. Amongst the unemployed India, the agricultural unemployed have been computed at 40 millions and there is a universal desire to mechanise agriculture which means that the unemployed will be still further greatly increased. But we have just

now seen that the revival of hand-loom weaving and hand-spun yarn would alone provide work for 120 millions. Similarly, the use of hand-pounded rice and hand-ground flour would feed 2 crores of stomachs in addition and if only we follow the cult of the All India Village Industries' Association and use along with hand-spun yarn, hand-woven cloth, a hand-pounded rice and hand-ground flour, also hand-made jaggery, hand-pressed oil and hand-prepared paper, there would be no unemployment in India. The villages will then be self-sufficient, and a new social order will be inaugurated. These seven constitute of *Saptaheshvari* of Rural Reconstruction and National Renaissance in India.

### *Hand and Machine-spun Yarn*

A friend has enquired as to the limits of fineness to which hand-spun yarn can reach, as against machine-spun yarn.

The subject is of historic interest and brings back the memories of the days when hand-spinning was flourishing and the population was thriving. Readers may find the subject interesting.

The question of comparison of mill yarn with hand-spun yarn arose at a time when the cotton-mills were fairly established and were after the conquest of the textile markets by ousting the hand-made products. There was an assumption in those days that mills could produce yarn as fine as those used for muslins. Attempts were made to imitate muslin. But they failed. The result of comparative tests of mill-muslins and the genuine product are recorded in Watson's 'Textile Manufactures' published by the India Office, London, 1866.

Watson describes the result of examination of three pieces of muslins exhibited. One was a piece of French

muslin of 440's, spun by Thomas Houldsworth & Co. and shown at the International Exhibition of 1862. Another was a piece of English Muslin stated to be of 540's yarn exhibited in International Exhibition, 1851. The third was a piece of real Dacca muslin, of 404 counts, Malmal Khās, from the Indian Museum. The count of the English sample being 540's was disputed and Mr. Watson remarks that "of the accuracy of this No., however, there is good reason for doubt."

### *Dacca Yarn*

But these counts in any case could not be taken as final as the determinations were not made directly from yarn but from woven pieces. In weaving, the yarn is starched and on subsequent washing the starch goes out along with some fats. The weight of the original yarn may then get reduced. The pieces may be then finally starched after wash. So, all these processes vary the results and an accurate determination could not be based on the usual method of count finding. It was proposed to submit samples to microscopic examination and find out the diameter of thread and the number of filaments in the yarn. As a result of microscopic examination it was found that "the diameter of the Dacca yarn is less than that of the finest European." "The number of ultimate fibres or filaments in each thread is considerably smaller in Dacca than in the European yarns," being 8 fibres in Dacca and 14 in mills. But the single fibres of Dacca were of larger diameter. These single fibres were stronger in structure proportionally to the fibres of the Sea-Island cotton from which the mill products were made. The investigators decided that "the superior fineness of

Dacca yarn depends chiefly on the fact that it contains a smaller number of filaments; the mode of spinning makes it more compressed but it is not probable that this greatly affects the result." But this is not all. The mill-made muslins that were exhibited were only to show that such yarn could be made and woven but were not intended for wear as they were too weak. "For wear these very fine machine-made muslins of Europe are practically useless, whereas the very finest of the hand-made ones from India are proverbially lasting and bear frequent washing which finest English or European muslins do not"

The investigators also made out that it was the fibre of the Dacca cotton that was partly responsible for the superiority of the Dacca yarn. The sea-Island cotton was longer in fibre which were thinner in diameter and Dacca fibres were shorter in length and thicker in diameter and yarns of the same count showed superiority for the Dacca product.

It was probably because of these discoveries that the attempts to imitate the Dacca muslins were given up. The highest effective count to which sea-Island cotton could be spun, has been found to be 300's. it can now therefore be said that the highest mill count possible is 300's, while the highest count of hand-spun yarn is 400's. But this was not the limit for Dacca. I have seen reference of Dacca yarn going up to 700 to 1000 counts. This is quite likely. 9 filaments of Dacca fibre go to make the 400 counts in the muslin. Therefore if yarn is made so that only 5 or 4 or 3 filaments form the diameter, then 600 to 1000 counts seem to be feasible.

It might be argued that if Dacca-Muslin-Cotton were spun in the mills, equally good results might be



obtained. But it was not so. Dacca-Muslin-Cotton treated in the mills gave poor results.

*Highest counts in Mill Yarn*

At present the highest count made in the mills from the best Sea-Island cotton is 300's and no higher. This is the practical limit. It is the best cotton that goes up to make 300's. But slightly lower grades of Sea-Island, or the *Florida* and *Georgia* grade of Sea-Island cotton as also the Egyptian finest do give much less counts being 100 or 70's twists or 120's weft. (Todd: *The World's Cotton Crops*, 1923).

Not only at Dacca but in other places of India, very high counts of yarns were made from local cottons, though Dacca stood incomparably high.

The Report of the Operations of the Cotton Department of the Central Provinces, Berar, 1867 (India Office) has the following interesting account (p. 21):

At the exhibitions of Nagpore, Jubbulpur and Akola, it was difficult to convince visitors that the yarn shown there was of native manufacture, spun by the hand with the assistance only of the rude primitive looking spinning wheel, exhibited at the same department. A piece of native thread exhibited by me at Akola was of such fineness that I have calculated that a pound weight of this yarn would reach a distance of 117 miles.

117 miles to the pound works out to 240-250 counts, and this is explained in the footnote to the report, where also further information is recorded:

It is on record that No. 400 has been spun...The Chanda specimen, above alluded to, would, according to the English standard, be No. 244 fineness, and this produced by the Dbers. At Nagpore and Oomrair thread of about No. 140 is very generally used for the fine dhôtees.

Where are those Dhers,—those cottons and those dhotees? Like the Dacca muslin they have all been swept away by the onslaught of mechanisation. In fact, the Nagpur exhibitions referred to in the Report of 1867, were held to popularise British Mill textiles. Almost all the cloth required in the Central Province then, were made in the Province itself and the Mill Competition was to commence seriously.

"Memorandum of the number of stalls held by different classes of Traders at Weekly market of Jamoorghotta (Chanda), December, 1864," states that there were 521 stalls of cloth out of which there were only 5 shops selling English cloth as under:

1. Shops selling expensive turbans, dhotees, shawls &c., of native manufacture .. .. .	25
2. Shops selling English cloth .. .. .	5
3. Koshteets, weavers of finer native cloth *.. ..	110
4. Rang-rez, Dyers, selling stamped and dyed cloth, native .. .. .	26
5. Salewars selling coloured cloth for women .. ..	5
6. Dhers selling coarse cloth of their own manufacture	350
Total .. ..	521

Forty-four of these were regular traders, who came to market with their carts and large stocks, and remained for a couple of days. The remainder were of a poorer class, who brought small bundles of cloth on their backs, and whose sales were small.

Where are those sellers of "expensive turbans and dhotees of native manufacture," "the Koshteets," "the Rang-rez," "the Salewars," and "the Dhers" who frequented the "Weekly market of Jamoorghotta in the Chinmoor Perganah in the Chanda District?"

*Spinning the last citadel*

We take the following from the columns of the *Harijan*. "Until very recently spinning constituted the last citadel of the poor in their eternal struggle against the wolf at the door, and gave them their daily bread when all other sources had failed. And this is true not only of India, it is equally true of Arabia and other countries of Western Asia, as will be seen from the following beautiful story of a devout Israelite in the Arabic *Alif Laylah Wa Laylah* (348th night ff.) The translation is Sir Richard Burton's, slightly modernized here and there:

"There was once a devout man of the children of Israel, whose family spun cotton thread; and he used every day to sell the yarn and buy fresh cotton, and with the profit, he laid in daily bread for his household. One morning he went out and sold the day's yarn as was his wont, when there met him one of his brethren, who complained to him of need: so he let him have the price of the thread and returned empty-handed to his family who said to him, "Where is the cotton and the food?" Quoth he, "Such a one met me and complained to me of want; whereupon I have given him the price of the yarn." And they said, "How shall we do? We have nothing to sell."—(V.G.D. in *Harijan*, January 11, 1936).

*Mill Cloth versus Khadi*

Many people often ask why mill cloth should be excluded from Khaddar and Swadeshi exhibitions, why mill cloth which is Swadeshi should not be permitted to be worn by office-bearers amongst Congressmen. For one thing mill cloth which is richly financed does not require the aid of a struggling exhibition to advertise it. Khaddar is required to be worn as a condition pre-requisite to participation in elections to a place upon any elective body in the Congress Organisations

because it feeds the poor and directs the course of flow of money from the city to the town and the village.

But there is a general relaxation amongst responsible men who have latterly been taking to the use of Mill cloth. Most people do not understand the economic and moral implications underlying the use of Mill fabrics. 'Is it not Swadeshi?' people ask. 'Yes.' But all that is Swadeshi does not help the poor man. Indian polity has to be re-aligned not only with a view to protecting the country from British Imperialism but also from the clutches of the Indian capitalist.

The mills are all owned by rich capitalists drawing labourers from the villages to the towns. And when you examine the conditions of the life of the labourers and compare them with conditions under which they have been living in the villages from which they have emigrated, the contrast will strike you as one to be viewed with the utmost sorrow.

The mill hands,—for after all they are 'hands,' not 'heads'—much less 'hearts'—do no creative work. The creative faculty is dead in them. They do not manufacture an article from the beginning to the end; they feed a machine, or draw a thread, or count a number of packets, or water a particular instrument, or oil, or turn or twist, and the day's work is done. At the end of the day they have only their wages to look to, and not the work that they have created. They have not endowed the inanimate objects which constitute the raw materials, with a living shape and made them animated, finished products.

Contrast this with the work of the sculptor who takes a rough piece of stone and then carves it out into a beautiful idol or model. Or take the weaver who weaves a piece of cloth in the day. He can own it,

he can use it, he can sell it, he can pledge it, he can preserve it for the marriage of his son. But the mill worker works the whole day and drinks up half of his wages if not three-fourths, for sheer relaxation against the work carried out under unnatural conditions, and in unexhilarating manner. What enlivens the human spirit is not the amount of wages but the joy of the work. That joy is not for the workmen in the mills.

On the moral side, we see how men are separated from women, even though belonging to the same family, and men come into contact with women belonging to another family. The family working in the mills is not a harmonious unity, a compact unit, devoted to the pursuit of a creative art but is simply broken up. Even the children from the mother's lap are no exception. In mills there is regimentation, while in the cottage industry the sanctity of the home is kept intact and the ownership of the property produced is equally intact.

People talk of the cheapness of the mill cloth but do not see that the very cheapness for which they are caring is the ruin of their poor neighbours and perhaps their own mothers and sisters. While appreciating the fact that a mill produces 5000 lbs. of cloth a day which is equivalent to 15,000 square yards, our friends seldom realise that through the operation of that mill 1000 weavers are thrown out of work. Next to agriculture, weaving is the most widespread industry. For, next to food raiment is the inevitable necessary and concomitant of life. Therefore, when you begin to import your food products and your fabrics as well, you have destroyed the two main industries of the country. That is why we want people to eat indigenuous food and wear hand-woven cloth. "If hand-

woven cloth is rational, mill cloth too is equally rational" say some, but we cannot say this, for you cannot sustain only the weaver and starve the poor widow in the village, the poor old mother who has lost her son or the sister-in-law who would not be maintained by her brother-in-law.

Look, on the contrary, at the mill-owners, and mill-agents, their capital and out-turn, their commissions and dividends, their bungalows and bathing pools, their motors and horses, their trips to the hills and visits to the continent, their luxuries and extravagances. Do they require your aid to carry on their business and that—at the expense of the naked and the starving in the villages?

### *Mill Cloth versus Handloom Cloth*

The Mill-industry in India is a competitor to the handloom industry. It is to minimize this competition that during the time of the Congress Ministry in Madras the pure mill cloth shops were required to take out licenses. It is not pretended that the measure effected any very great results but it indicates the competition that exists between the two wings of the textile manufacture. It is interesting to study side by side the views of the mill owners and the protagonists of the handloom industry on the subject.

The view that the handloom industry in the country has not been properly organised, is expressed by the Bengal Millowners' Association in a letter addressed to the Government of India on the question of solution of the problem of safeguarding the handloom industry.

Referring to the 'heavy burden which have been imposed on the cotton textile industry of the country from time to time,'

the Association says that there is no scope for further taxation of the industry. It observes that if an excise duty or a cess is imposed on mill-made cloth, it is essential that, in order to offset the disadvantage to indigenous mill-made cloth as against imported cloth, a countervailing duty should be imposed on the imports of all similar goods from abroad. The result will then be an all-round increase in prices of all cotton goods, whether hand-woven or mill-made, local or imported, and the resulting increase in prices would very adversely affect the consumption of all kinds of cotton goods because of the low buying capacity of the people. The Association points out that mills in Bengal have not a large variety to choose from and they are mostly small uneconomic units with slender resources, concentrating mainly on two or three lines. The Association, therefore, fails, to understand how a demarcation on the basis of varieties may be enforced in the province without asking the local mills to close down. It further points out that reduction of duty on yarn would have the effect of exposing the local mills completely to a very severe competition from foreign imports and thus destroying a growing industry of the country.

The Association is of the opinion that the terms on which The handloom industry secures its raw materials are disadvantageous to it because it is entirely at the mercy of the Mahajans, while the industry also suffers from the lack of adequate finance as also from a defective marketing system. It also mentions that much time, labour and energy are wasted in the preparation of yarn. "If some system of co-operative purchasing organisation could be set up under governmental supervision, it might be of considerable assistance in enabling the weavers to obtain their supplies of raw material at a reasonable price." It suggests the establishment of centres for completing the preparatory processes in the handloom industry with the use of power.

### *Gulzarilal Nanda on Khadi*

Indian mills produce cloth worth about Rs. 50 crores. Of this, a sum of about Rs. 10 crores constitutes the wage bill

of the industry. Khadi of the same value would provide Rs. 35 crores in the shape of wages. Khadi manufactured from the same quantity of raw cotton would, if the existing circumstances continue, be sold at Rs. 100 crores of which the wage bill would amount to Rs. 70 crores. As against a rise of 50 crores in the price of cloth, the increase in the amount distributed as wages is 60 crores. The explanation is, that of the 60 crores of rupees which the mill industry saves in wages by restricting its employees to a small fraction of the number that would be engaged in the production of Khadi, only Rs. 50 crores are turned on to the consumers and the balance of Rs. 10 crores is appropriated in excess charges for rent, interest, profit, etc. Paying the higher prices of khadi is equivalent to withdrawing purchasing power to the extent of Rs. 50 crores from the consumers of cloth in all parts of the country and Rs. 10 crores from what is largely unearned increments and taxes, and transferring all that to the half-starved workers and peasants in the rural areas. The increase in the expenditure on cloth incurred by the well-to-do sections and the urban communities owing to the higher price of khadi would be a net addition to the purchasing power of the villagers, as also the saving of 10 crores of rupees of interest, profit, etc., included in the price of mill cloth. As far as the substitution of mill cloth by khadi in case of the villagers themselves is concerned, there would be some increase in the clothing bill, but that would be more than balanced by the additional wages provided for them through khadi. In fact, in their case, the change will very largely operate as a reversion to self-sufficiency in the matter of cloth. The redistribution of purchasing power involved in the change from mill cloth to khadi would bring about a large curtailment of the present outlay of society on luxuries and amusements and would mean a corresponding increase in the expenditure on articles and services necessary for the maintenance of health and efficiency. At the higher price the consumption of cloth would diminish to an extent, but that would largely affect the superfluous use of cloth in the country. The argument applies with greater strength to foreign cloth. Even to the extent it provides wages, it does that for foreign workers who lead a life of comparative



luxury at the expense of the famished villagers of India.

Again the wage bill of the mill industry is distributed among about four lakhs of workers, each earning about ten annas per day on the average, whereas khadi would spread out rupees seventy crores in wages among about one crore of persons giving each an average of about three annas a day. A considerable part of a rupee of the city worker's wages returns to the well-to-do as rent, interest and profit; whereas the rupee spent in the village would, in its turn, furnish support and sustenance to many primary producers.

He next presents khadi as a force for international peace:

If all the workers whom mill cloth keeps out of employment in India were to be engaged in machine production, there would be enough cloth produced in India in one year to clothe the entire world for several years. If India were to succeed in foisting the surplus on the rest of the world, millions of people in the other countries would be deprived of employment as well as livelihood. Mechanized production does not only threaten the lives of individuals and sections within a nation, but it also imperils the happiness, independence, safety and integrity of nations.

His cultural argument bears quotation:

The handicraftsman imparted his character to his goods. The machine produces for distant markets with no human link or mutual obligation between the producer and the consumer and the result is a pile of soul-less goods.

The section on the economics of khadi is equally arresting. He disposes of the 'absolute price' theory as absurd.

In India there is a difference of degree and of procedure only between the action of Government when it imposes a 50 per centum duty on certain foreign goods and thereby comes in the way of the consumers obtaining this class of goods at

40 per centum less cost than they are bound to pay on account of the duty, and in Mahatma Gandhi's appeal to the people to spend on khadi 100 per centum more than they would have to pay for similar mill cloth. Neither khadi nor mill cloth is economically sound in the sense that they can defy the onslaught of cheaper goods and hold their ground without external help.

Is dearer khadi, he asks, worse than an unemployment dole? It is the other way about. The latter involves a waste of considerable part of the revenues in unproductive work and big salaries, and what is still worse maintains the unemployed without furnishing them with any useful occupation.

Is the income from khadi insignificant? The aggregate family income under the cottage craft system has a decided advantage against the aggregate family income under the factory system.

And if the United States helps the cotton crop with an immense subsidy, and if in India we kept alive the steel industry by giving large subsidies under the Steel Protection Act of 1924, why not a subsidy for khadi, and a total prohibition of the importation of cloth from outside and delimitation of the sphere of mill cloth, under better political conditions?

Does the handicraft system ensure an adequate level of production? Because, answers Sjt. Nanda, the workers engaged in the mill industry are enabled to produce at half the price 50 times as much as the hand workers can, one may not assume that the wealth of the country is one hundred times increased. One only out of the 50 workers has got work in the mills and the remaining 49 have ceased to create wealth.

When, [he sums up], "the balance-sheet of gain and loss of the change from khadi to millcloth is drawn up, it would be

necessary to show, against the saving of fifty crores of rupees in price, the annual loss of over 300 crores of working days of the villages which at the lowest computation are not worth less than the amount saved. At rates paid at present for making khadi, the value of this labour is about Rs. 70 crores.—*Harijan* (May 7, 1936).

The very exhibitions have in recent years changed their character.

They are no longer "Cinema shows," [as stated by Mahatma Gandhi at the Lucknow Exhibition], where you meet with things to captivate in a sensual way your eyes and ears. I may tell you that we have tried to boycott from this Exhibition everything that had no educative value. We have tried to make the Exhibition a sacred and a holy place, a feast for your eyes and ears, a spiritual feast capable of purifying the senses. I shall tell you why. Do you know Orissa and its skeletons? Well, from that hungerstricken, impoverished land of skeletons have come men who have wrought miracles in bone and born and silver. Go and see these things not only ready-made but in the making, and see how the soul of man even in an impoverished body can breathe life into lifeless horns and metal. A poor potter has also worked miracles out of clay. Things which I thought would be worth several annas, are worth only a copper or a couple of coppers and yet they are delicate little pieces of art. A dear sister purchased the other day a little 'Krishna' in ivory. She was not given to worshipping Lord Krishna, but she now tells me that she has begun to worship the exquisite little form.

The Exhibition is thus not a spectacular show, but a kind of fairy land. But our tastes have been so debased that miracles happening before our very eyes appear like so much dust or clay and trifles coming from abroad become exquisite pieces of art, water from a spring in far off Europe with the witchery of an unintelligible name becomes invested with miraculous equality, while the water of the holy Ganges which is said to be a purifier and a natural disinfectant seems to be no better than water from a dirty pool.

*De Valera's Economic Philosophy*

Mr. De Valera expressed his own economic philosophy in the plainest terms at a luncheon given in his honour by the American Club in Paris in June, 1933, a few weeks before the World Economic Conference. The greatest curse of this world, he said, was free trade; indeed, all international trade was wicked unless it was limited to "surplus production" (e.g., the Coal and Cattle Agreement of January, 1935, recently renewed). Under the banner of "free trade" England had killed Irish industry and had turned Ireland into an underpopulated reservoir of foodstuffs. The Irish policy must be to reverse that situation of dependence on her over-industrialised neighbour which had brought her low.

Mr. De Valera has a strong case. Ninety years ago there were some 670,000 acres of wheatfields in the area now comprising Saorstát Éireann. Every country contributed its share of that acreage. Not only did Ireland produce all the wheat necessary for her own requirements, she actually exported a surplus. With the repeal of the Corn Laws and the application of the free trade principle to Ireland in 1847, the market was flooded with cheap supplies of wheat from America. Ireland's wheatlands were turned into ranches, families evicted wholesale and farms consolidated into pasture lands. The result was that in 1931 the acreage sown to wheat was reduced to 21,000 acres. To-day (i. e., the 1935 crop), by the aid of various inducements and intensive propaganda, the area under wheat shows the respectable figure of 170,000 acres. Nor has there been any extensive substitution of wheat for other cereals. A subsidiary aspect of the exten-

sion of tillage farming is the control of the importation of animal feeding stuffs. Millers are now required to include a definite proportion of home-grown grain in all maize meal manufactured by them. The importation of maize in the form of meal is prohibited altogether, and that of maize in the form of grain is restricted under a licensing system. It is claimed that this policy has secured consumption of home-grown grain to an extent corresponding with the production of over 100,000 acres.

*Sir Alam Pim on village welfare*

In a brochure published by Sir Alam Pim on behalf of the Indian Village Welfare Association (of England), we come across some valuable information regarding village organization—both social and economic. The pressure of population on the soil and the pressure of debt are factors that complicate greatly rural problems anywhere.

In India these present a stupendous problem; our density of population 248 per square mile being too high for what has now become a purely agricultural country. The average holdings of land in India are necessarily small, and as Sir Alam Pim notes small holdings can provide a reasonable standard of living for a family only with the aid of a diversified agriculture, access to markets and co-operative marketing, with spare-time home employments. In Japan, with holdings so small that only 25 per cent of the peasants have more than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land, agricultural organizations of all kinds abound, nothing is wasted, fragmentation has been largely abolished, and subsidiary industries such as the rearing of silk worms employ large numbers. The only ray of hope for India that Sir Alam Pim can see in the direction of reducing rural unemployment is in Mahatma Gandhi's 'Charkha movement' which, in his

view, represents an attempt to meet a real need. In China the average holding per family is one acre, whereas it is five acres per family in India.

### *Is Khadi Economical?*

Sjt. Pyarelal narrates the details of an interesting discussion which Gandhiji had with a group of noted Economists on the theme,—‘is Khadi economical as compared to mill cloth’? Incidentally they also covered the subject of handicrafts. The view of the economist friends was that khadi and handicrafts were all right as a means for providing industrial relief to the unemployed in the present stage of India’s transition, and as such deserved to be supported but they could not be given a central place in national planning. It would be wrong in principle, they held, to prop up inherently ‘uneconomical industries,’ as they considered khadi and most other handicrafts to be, in order to make them compete with machine products to the detriment of the latter and thereby curtail the productive capacity of the country. Gandhiji’s contention was that it was the factory product that was today being subsidised by society in a number of ways at the expense of handicrafts. For instance, the factory system depended for its success on cheap railway transport, special municipal facilities, existence and collaboration of a number of collateral key industries, ample banking and insurance facilities, a high level of general technical education to ensure an unfailing and plentiful supply of specialised and efficient labour. All these meant an enormous cost. But society did not grudge it as the concomitant conditions of life which resulted from it i.e., quick travelling, motor cars, the cinema,

radio, electric light, and a thousand and one thrills provided by what Stuart Chase has called 'the toys of civilization' are what the city bred intellectual, who today guides our social destinies, wants. The handicrafts, on the other hand, depend for their success on a different system of economics. If a rural-minded society provided these, no power on earth would be able to compete with handicrafts. But then such a society shall have to be content with the simple joys and satisfactions which the countryside provides and not dream of a Utopia in which all the villages would be equipped with the latest 'modern conveniences.' The so-called economical character of factory production as compared to handicrafts, production today is not an inherent quality, but only a conferred attribute depending on the standard of values which society has adopted or considers desirable to adopt. The only inalterable and rockbottom test of whether an occupation or method of production is economical or otherwise, is how far it answers life's vital needs, what the making of it means to the producer.

### *Ellen H. Easton's Standpoint*

Mr. Ellen H. Easton examines the case for handicrafts from this standpoint in his Russel Foundation Volume 'Handicrafts of Southern Highlands', a copy of which he has sent to Gandhiji. The Russel Sage Foundation was established in 1909 by Mr. Russell Sage 'for the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States of America.' In carrying out its purpose, the Foundation maintains a staff which, among other duties, conducts study of social conditions, authorised by the General Director, "where new

information, its analysis and interpretation seem necessary in order to formulate and advance practicable measures aimed at improvement." From time to time the foundation publishes the results of these studies in book or pamphlet form.

*Charkha the "Maro Roy Rangilo"*

Once the spinning wheel was the beloved of India. It was not uncommon fifty years ago for an old widow who earned her bread by the charkha, to call it '*Maro Roy Rangilo*.' 'My gay monarch,' was, however, forgotten in the glamour of machine-made clothes. Gandhiji has been seeking its restoration for the last twenty years.

Khadi has become the emblem of nationalism, of purity and of village reconstruction. The progress made can be judged from the work done by the All India Spinners' Association in 1938.

A comparative study of the work done by the A. I. S. A. and a Mill with 40,000 spindles and 1000 looms with a dyeing and bleaching plant:

	<i>A.I.S.A.</i>	<i>Mill</i>
Capital .. .. .	Rs. 29,54,717	Rs. 50,00,000
Total production of cloth:		
value .. .. .	Rs. 55,10,525	Rs. 22,50,000
square yards	1,25,82,499	1,70,00,000
Number of villages served .	13,265	
<i>Production Centres:</i>		
A.I.S.A. Branches .. ..	666	
Certified Organisations ..	2,17,883	
No. of spinners benefited ..	2,81,880	200
No. of weavers engaged ..	18,632	500
No. of other artisans and		
workers engaged ..	9,324	650
Total persons benefited ..	3,09,836	1,350



The A. I. S. A. has 60% of the capital of a mill-producer. 70% of the cloth produced by a mill, benefits 24000% of Indians maintained by a mill. If the same amount of capital as in a mill is invested in A. I. S. A. the latter will benefit 400 times the number of individuals benefited by the mill, that is, 5,00,000 persons.

*Is Khaddar Economically Sound?*

The question is often asked whether Khaddar is economically sound. The question is really put in a wrong form to start with. In the open market a more organised industry will always be able to drive out a less organised one, especially when the former is assisted by bounties and can command unlimited capital and can, therefore, afford to sell its manufactures at a temporary loss. The process of peaceful penetration by the British into India implied a silent displacement of the village industries and hand-made goods by those originating from machinery. The poor are made poorer while the rich made richer. Yet, Gandhi has ventured to state,—“Khadi is the only true economic proposition in terms of the millions of villagers until such time, if ever, when a better system of supplying work and adequate wages for every able-bodied person above the age of sixteen, male or female, is found for his field, cottage or even factory in every one of the villages of India; or till sufficient cities are built up to displace the villages so as to give the villagers the necessary comforts and amenities that a well-regulated life demands and is entitled to.” “The problem is how to find work and wages for the millions of villagers who are fast losing the will to work, to think and even

to live," says Gandhi. Khadi supplies them with work, tools and a ready-market for their manufactures. It gives them hope where but yesterday there was blank despair. Khadi, in that case, provides work for 12 crores of India's population while hand-pounding and hand-grinding afford occupation for an additional two crores.

### *Khaddar and Sentiment*

Khadi-wearers should know that the economics of Khadi are different from the ordinary economics which are based on competition in which patriotism, sentiment and humanity play a little part. Khadi economics are based on patriotism, sentiment and humanity. The increase in the wages which has been recently effected and which has fastened up to half-an-anna per hour mean some rise in the price of khadi, but not a proportionate rise. This is the bounty given by the Khadi-wearers to the producers of Khadi which is not patronised by the government of the day. It is true that a complaint is heard that Khadi is mainly supported by the poor middle class. But they have the consolation that the proceeds of the purchase are going back to the market only in a different form. The necessary condition is that sale-proceeds should revert to the men that sell goods in some other form and promote inter craft trade and enrich the locality. It is the only real insurance against famine and unemployment.

Khadi has been conceived as the foundation and the image of *Ahimsa*. A real khadi-wearer will not utter an untruth, nor harbour violence, nor deceit, nor impurity. A village session of the Congress should

be capable of being held at an expense of Rs. 5,000. But the Vithal Nagar was built at a cost of seven and a half lakhs of rupees. Gandhi complained that he was not taken on foot to Faizpur and Haripura and was not allowed to foot it out. "They did not take me even in a bullock cart," said he.

The place of exhibition of the Congress is a place of pilgrimage for us all, our Kashi and our Mecca, where we have come in order to offer our prayers for freedom and to consecrate ourselves to the nation's service. You have not come here to lord it over the poor peasants but to learn how to get off their backs by participating in their daily toil, by doing the scavenger's job, by washing for yourselves, by grinding your own flour. Leaders are leaders because they are the leading servants of their masses' esteem if we do not make them look seated on the masses' backs. If the Congress venue is a place of pilgrimage, all become one and partake of the same *prasad* that Jagannath, the Lord of the World provides.

Those who fear that manual work militates against ones' capacity for intellectual work have only to know what R.B. Gregg thinks. For him Khadi is part of the non-violent programme. He emphasises the biological view that "in the evolution of man the development of the hand played a great part in the development of the brain." R.B. Gregg's services, it may be remembered, were requisitioned by pacifists in England like Canon Sheppard, Mr. George Lansbury, Lord Ponsonby and others who were organising in 1936, a great, big peace drive in order to meet the situation in Europe. The two subjects, mental labour and nonviolent activity are inextricably bound together. Manual labour is prescribed by way of "occupational therapy" in mental diseases and it consists of weaving,

carpentry, clay modelling, basket-making and it is said that these play a great part, creating interest in life giving them cheerfulness, self-support and sanity once more.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ALL INDIA VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

The All India Village Industries Association is an organisation started at the Congress of 1934 in Bombay and its successive annual reports make edifying reading. They have covered progress not merely in respect of cottage industries and village crafts but also of problems relating to sanitation and hygiene of villagers, improvement in diet and promotion of dead and dying industries. The institution has worked without capital and has had donations somewhere about Rs. 45,000 in the first year. The primary question dealt with on the side of sanitation is a crusade against the misuse of streets in towns as well as villages,—not only streets but open spaces and river beds as latrines and this habit of centuries requires to be changed. Human excreta is one of the best manurial material and yet one has to overcome a mountain of prejudice and superstition before one can get people to recognise this simple fact. They are so ignorant as not to be able to see the gold mine that they possess in their back-yards in the manure of their cattle which they mercilessly put to use as fuel. This is a great economic disaster. Demonstrations have been organised in certain parts of Bengal in order to prove the superior manurial value of human night-soil. The one remedy against the age-long breach in the matter of handling human excreta is that this task

has been assigned as the professional work of the lower classes, and the nation will take to it only when the men belonging to higher castes take to scavenging as a valuable occupation. Sweeping roads, removing thorns, bushes and shrubs and clearing up rubbish have been carried on practically everywhere in the centres of the Sangam. It has become fashionable for people in cities to work in the villages—to fix a day in the year and to give a demonstration of the sweeping of streets by high officials including heads of districts. In some villages in the Punjab, the villagers have decided to sweep their own streets themselves on every *Ekdushi* day.

### *Gandhi's Instructions*

Gandhi's instructions in regard to the ideal village worker are worth noting. They are worth quoting as they constitute important literature on the subject:—

Today I propose to speak to you about the ideal of work and life that you have to keep in view and work towards. You are here not for a career in the current sense of the term. Today man's worth is measured in Rs. as. ps. and a man's educational training is an article of commerce. If you have come with that measure in minds, you are doomed to disappointment. At the end of your studies you may start with an honorarium of ten rupees and end with it. You may not compare it with what a manager of a great firm or a high official gets. We have to change the current standards. We promise you no earthly careers, in fact we want to wean you from ambition of that kind. You are expected to bring your food-bill within Rs. 6/- a month. The food-bill of an I.C.S. may come to Rs. 60 a month, but that does not mean that he is or will be on that account physically or intellectually or morally superior to you. He may be for all his sumptuous living, even inferior in all

these respects. You have come to this institution because, I presume, you do not value your qualifications in metal. You delight in giving your service to the country for a mere pittance. A man may earn thousands of rupees on the Stock Exchange but may be thoroughly useless for our purposes. Such men would be unhappy in our humble surroundings and we should be unhappy in theirs. We want ideal labourers in the country's cause. They will not hither about what food they get, or what comforts they are assured by the villagers whom they serve. They will trust to God for whatever they need, and will exult in the trials and tribulations they might have to undergo. This is inevitable in our country where we have 7,00,000 villages to think of. We cannot afford to have a salaried staff of workers who have an eye to regular increments, provident funds and pensions. Faithful service of the villagers is its own satisfaction. Some of you will be tempted to ask if this is also the standard for the villagers. Not by any means. These prospects are for us *servants*, and not for the village-folk, our masters. We have sat on their backs all these years, and we want to accept voluntary and increasing poverty in order that our masters' lot may be much better than it is to-day. We have to enable them to earn much more than they are earning today. That is the aim of the Village Industries Association. It cannot prosper unless it has an ever-increasing number of servants such as I have described. May you be such servants.

### *Machinery is Violence in Action*

The A.I.V.I.A. has taken enormous pains to show how, just as the constructive programme is non-violence in action, the machine industries are only violence in action. Violence is the essence of centralised production because there is violence involved in the very basis of economic organisation by which such production is made possible, fostered and promoted. Mass production not for consumption but for export is

undoubtedly based upon the quest for markets which must be secured by political ascendancy which in turn requires military superiority. In other words, production for export is wholly dependent upon violence in the economic and political life of the nation which weds itself to such a centralisation. The element of competition that must necessarily enter into such an organisation is itself a source of violence. Time is really money because the greater the production, the less the over-head charges and, therefore, the cheaper the products and wider the circulation of goods. Then again the producer can get to the market as fast as possible, so that necessity for economic speed involves the production of goods not for consumption but with reference to the demand. The demand must therefore, be artificially created and this can be created only by the play of violence. This leads to the process which is euphemistically described as "civilizing the backward nations," and, therefore, to politically controlled markets. A low labour wage is necessarily aimed at and is a process of exploiting labour which is the main stream of wealth distribution.

By the year 1939, the initiative given by the Congress in the development of village industries appears to have made some impression upon the Government of India which published voluminous report on the *ghanis* (the indigenous oil-presses) also hand-made paper with special reference to Khadi Pratisthan paper. The Association has done remarkable work in training so many as 96 students in paper-making, 52 in oil-pressing, 24 in agriculture, 18 in palm-gur-making, 10 in paddy-husking and flour grinding. In C. P. and Berar, so many as 38 centres have opened to work under the guidance of the Association and in Bombay, Orissa and Madras



special efforts have been made for the expansion of village industries like oil-pressing, palm-gur-making, bee-keeping, paper-making and so on. Notable event of the year was the organisation of what is called Udyog Bhavan—real house, of workshops for various departments—which was formally opened by Gandhiji in December 1938. In addition, there is a museum known as Magan Sangrahalaya providing full information regarding the working of the various cottage industries and working under the joint control of the Village Industries' Association and the spinners' Association. A visit to the institution shows the new world in which we have to live and how Swaraj under national reconstruction will be as much beyond recognition as compared with India to-day is compared with India of 100 years ago. Of all branches of work that is still exasperatingly slow seems to be that of sanitation. The callousness which has overtaken the minds of the people makes them refuse to take any advice or proceed by the lessons of devotees of sanitation in respect of cleaning of streets with their own hands. Yet 100 villagers cleaned their streets in an organised way in the year 1939 and in 27 villages, wells and tanks were cleaned and deepened. Shops of village products have been opened in sixteen centres. The growth of vegetables has been particularly attended to in Bengal. Paddy-husking and flour-grinding centres have been opened in the various parts of the Madras Presidency. The Guntur District Association alone have sold Rs. 41,000/- worth of hand-pounded rice. *Ghanis* have been greatly improved so as to produce the maximum output of oil from the oil seeds. At the Association headquarters 28,870 seers of oil from various seeds have been pressed. Gur-making is becoming

more and more popular and the replacement of sugar by gur has led to the purification of the latter commodity and it has been observed that the Madras Sweet Toddy Rules are the best in India. The excise rules appear to be defective in many provinces. Bee-keeping has become widely popular. It is a source of interest to young men. Its popularity appears to be growing all over India. Almost every year, the number of centres at which paper-making has been adopted is growing. The dearness of labour has led to the manufacture of paper particularly expensive and it is regrettable that in centres where the paper manufacture is claimed the best-made in India, it is not possible to organise this industry on commercial basis. In the matter of soap-making, great changes have come. The Sabarmati Karyalaya eliminates imported caustic soda and produces soap from *Mahua* oil and *Sajjimat* (thin layer of white mud found in river beds), the annual production have risen from 33,590 lbs. in 1937 to 82,813 lbs. in 1938.

Considerable progress has been made in the matter of preserving sugar-cane by removing the outer skin and cutting it up in thin round slices and drying these in the sun and storing it up in an earthen vessel. These are soaked when required for use. A comparative study of the position of preserved sugarcane and fresh sugarcane has been made and the verdict is given that the sugarcane preserve gives a similar analysis to that of sugarcane, except that in the former there is greater concentration of all the food factors. The high iron content of the preserve is presumably due to contamination with iron during preservation.

Chakkis have popularised for paddy-husking. In Maharashtra, a chakki husks 80 lbs. of paddy in an hour

and costs Rs. 6.

In the matter of gur making, in order to delime palm juice, a gravel filter recommended by the Industrial Chemist to the Madras Government has been found useful.

In paper-making, raw materials like rags, sunn hemp, plantain stalk, jute (in the form of gunny bags), bamboo waste have all been used. Botha grass and marul fibre have been found to be good material. Improved methods of sorting waste paper have been found fruitful, and the dusting, trampling, washing have all been carefully studied.

*Researches by the A.I.V.I.A.*

The wide scope of research and investigation which the All India Village Industries Association has promoted to itself, is indicated by the highly scientific nature of both as studied by the All India circulars. Gur or jaggery would have an advantage over refined cane sugar as it has not been deprived of its valuable mineral constituents. Nevertheless, the fact remains that cooked fruit or fruit preserved in syrup can never take the place of fruit in its raw or ripe natural stage. Gur is the best available substitute for honey, but is a different class of sweet, more difficult of digestion and not so well suited for meeting the body requirements as is honey. Soda bi-carbonate serves as an emergency remedy when it becomes necessary to administer an alkali as a remedy, but it can never be a substitute for the organic alkali salts supplied in natural fruits, vegetables and unprocessed cereals. Butter in its natural state is neutral, being neither acid nor alkali. The boiled milk is acid-forming. And it is true that it serves

as a drain on the alkali reserves of the tissue. The boiling of the milk is the only easily available means of rendering it safe. Curds contain an excess of the acid ash-forming salts. In order to provide well-balanced supply, it is necessary to provide four parts of alkali-forming to one part of acid-forming materials. Curds curdled by junket which is made with rennet powder is better than ordinary curds as it leaves the milk in its normal balance. Ghee is not acid in itself but when it is used for cooking certain foods, it fixes certain alkali factors so that they become unavailable as such. Food so prepared while not actually acid in itself, does have an acid-like effect. Such remarkable results have been summarised for the benefit of the reader in the columns of the Harijan in answer to questions put by enquirers. These answers are provided by Dr. Menkel.

Very often we hear, the economists trained in the western schools and professors in Colleges exhorting people to raise their standard of living. They little realise that raising the standard of life means extension of the market for consumable goods; and where these goods are of a fashionable character, it often happens that the money is drained away from towns and cities to foreign countries. The object of the A.I.V.I.A. is to promote the circulation of money locally so that the proceeds of the sale may encourage trade and industry in roundabout areas and lead to increase in local production. Indeed, as Kumarappa has said, the circulation must be within a known area from within which the employees draw their purchasing power and their supplies also come. Greater consumption of goods from abroad, only means exports of raw materials and food products to countries abroad. This means greater transfer of purchasing power to the

foreign countries, increased misery and unemployment in our own country. To put it pithily in the words of Kumarappa "when a person is hungry, to increase his wants is to intensify his pangs of hunger." What do we mean by raising the standard of life? We go in for Japanese mat, Persian carpet, an Austrian light, an American stove, a Birmingham coffee grinder, English cups and saucers, German forks and spoons, Czechoslovakian three joints tables, Lancashire table-cloth, Austrian bentwood chairs, F. H. Ayre's bats and balls, billiard cues and tables imported from London, Reading Biscuits, Australian milk and Java sugar with French coffee and English jam and jelly. This is what "raising the standard of life" means. This means draining money abroad and pumping the contents of the money stream uphill. It is true that the vast millions of our country are on the verge of starvation and their irreducible minimum must be raised, but when you think of the middle and the upper middle classes in this connection, you are contemplating measures which mean red ruin to the millions of the starving and the naked.

### *Economic Conquest*

The economic conquest of India is little recognized by the educated classes. British conquest of India is not merely territorial in character but also social, economic, moral and even spiritual or unspiritual. The East India Company which was the real founder of British rule in India was the first joint-stock company which grew to huge dimensions and enriched the Englishmen. It owed its origin to the extraordinary profits made by the Dutch raising the price at one

sweep of a pepper pool from 3s. a lb. to 6s. and 8s.

Large sums of money were carried away to England during the time of Clive and it is said that from Bengal alone the East India Company and its servants extorted over £600,000 in bribes between 1757 and 1766. It was in 1767 that the British government insisted on taking a direct share of the plunder and the Company was forced to pay £400,000 a year into the Exchequer. Economic historians attribute the industrial revolution in England to the accumulation of capital due to rapid increase of trade based primarily on the monopoly control of a colonial empire and on direct exploitation of India. The abolition of the trading monopoly of the East India Company in 1813 was a land-mark in the economic exploitation of India. Lancashire cloth began to pour in for the first time in 1803 and the cotton goods imported to India three lacs worth in 1803 rose to two crores of rupees in the twenties. It has led to the destruction of the handloom industry in India. In 1835 Dr. Bowring said "Terrible are the accounts of the wretchedness of the poor Indian weavers, reduced to absolute starvation. And what was the sole cause? The presence of the cheaper English manufacture. Numbers of them died of hunger; the remainder were, for the most part, transferred to other occupations, principally agricultural.....The Dacca muslins celebrated over the whole world for their beauty and fineness, are almost annihilated from the same cause."\* The population of Dacca, the main centre of the Indian textile industry, decreased between 1815 and 1837 from 150,000 to 20,000. Thus

\* The long and doleful story of the Dacca Muslin is given elsewhere.

India which was both industrially and agriculturally rich became entirely an agricultural country supplying Britain with food and raw materials and obtaining from Britain all those manufactured goods which she was formerly manufacturing herself.

The story of Indian shipping makes equally sad reading. Meadows Taylor in his *History of India*, says :

The arrival in the port of London of Indian-produced and Indian-built ships created a sensation among the monopolists which could not be exceeded if a hostile fleet had appeared in the Thames. Ship-builders of the port of London took the lead in raising the cry of alarm. They declared that their business was in danger and that the families of all the ship-wrights in England were certain to be reduced to starvation.

From the Report of the Directors of the East India Company dated 17th January 1801, in which they opposed the employment of Indian-built ships in the trade between England and India, the following is one of the many arguments worth quoting.

No British heart would wish that any of the brave men who have merited so much of their country should be without bread whilst natives of the East brought the ships belonging to our own subjects into our own ports, and considered, therefore, in a fiscal, moral, commercial and political view, the apparent consequences of admitting these Indian sailors largely into our navigation form a strong additional objection to the concessions of the proposed privilege to any ships manned by them.

A British historian remarks, "India became the centre and keystone of the whole economic and financial fabric of the Empire." It is from such heights that India has fallen—from the keystone to the bottom-

less pit. The constructive programme so called is really a programme of reconstruction and reconquest and it behoves us to study it in detail.

### *Constructive Work and Ahimsa*

Speaking at Brindavan at one of the Annual Conference of the Gandhi Seva Sangh in 1939, Gandhi said:—

But that leads me to the very vital question you have asked, —‘what is the relation between constructive work and ahimsa? Why are they so intimately connected?’ Well, I think it is obvious enough that Hindu-Muslim unity, prohibition, and abolition of untouchability,—are impossible without non-violence. There remains only the spinning wheel. How does it become the symbol of non-violence? As I have already explained, the essential thing is the spirit in which you regard it, the attributes you invest it with. It is no quinine pill which has certain inherent properties in it, apart from what you think about it, The spinning wheel has no such inherent property. Take the *Gayatri mantra*. It cannot have the same effect on non-Hindus as it has on me, nor can the *Kalma* have the same reaction on me as it has on the Muslims. Even so the spinning wheel in itself has nothing which can teach ahimsa or bring Swaraj. But you have to think it with those attributes and it is transformed. Its obvious value is the service of the poor, but that does not necessarily mean that it should be a symbol of non-violence or an indispensable condition for Swaraj. But since 1920 I have connected the wheel with Swaraj and non-violence.

Then there is the programme of self-purification with which the spinning wheel is again intimately connected. Coarse home-spun signifies simplicity of life and therefore purity.

Without the spinning wheel, without Hindu-Muslim unity and without the abolition of untouchability there can be no



civil disobedience. Civil disobedience presupposes willing obedience of our self-imposed rules, and without it, civil disobedience would be a cruel joke. This is what came to me with redoubled conviction in the laboratory at Rajkot. If even one man fulfils all the conditions, he is capable of winning Swaraj. I am still far from being that ideal Satyagrahi. I said the same thing at the time we met to organise a Satyagraha campaign against the Rowlatt Act. When it was started we had only a handful of men, but we built up a considerable organisation out of that handful. As I am an imperfect Satyagrahi, I want your co-operation. In the process of organising and seeking your co-operation I myself grow, for my introspection never ceases. Even the time I am now giving you is as much in my own interest as in yours, or at least in my own interest if not in yours. For as I examine myself I am growing and evolving. No one is too old to grow, certainly not I. In the Transvaal, Satyagraha was born, but a few thousands wielded it there. Millions have wielded it here. Who knew that on the 6th of April, 1919 millions would rise up like one man in response to the call I had made from Madras? But the constructive programme is essential for the ultimate success; indeed, today I think we should be untrue to the nation if we did not fulfil the programme of the spinning wheel as a symbol of non-violence, no matter how long it takes.

*An Original Report by the Industrial Survey  
Committee in C.P.*

It was in the summer of 1939 (20-5-39) that "an original report" as published by the Industrial Survey Committee appointed by the C.P. Government on 15th December, 1938. Prof. Kumarappa describes that report neither as an *academic* survey, nor a *propagandic* survey, nor a *clinical* survey, but a *diagnostic* survey done in a short time with the set purpose of saving the patient's life by a suitable prescription and this is

national planning—planning the *economic* activity of each individual in relation to the raw material available within the field of our operations.” We give below a summary of the observations contained therein.

### 1. *Functions of the State*

“Any social organisation, as for instance a nation or a political unit like a province, needs a proper adjustment of the long-range and the short-range viewpoints. The range of interests of an individual is, generally speaking, limited. Where they run counter to the general welfare it is the function of organised society to balance these interests so that no harm may come to the social unit as a whole. Similarly when we find that the interest of rural economic units and urban industrial units clash, adjustment is necessary for the economic well-being of the body as a whole. As the State is the most common organisation entrusted with the performance of this function, those in charge of State administration will be justified in interfering for the common good. For the interests of the weak must be protected and there are functions to be performed which are beyond the reach of the individual citizen. As for example, the organising of marketing facilities and a study of the needs of the people, both of which duties demand time and money beyond the means and capacity of private individuals.

### 2. *Taxes and Expenditures*

The State functions by drawing its wherewithal from the people through taxation. If it exists for the

people, it follows that the incidence of taxation may not be such as will harm them economically. Therefore a heavy obligation is thrown on the administration, that of seeing that the expenditures of the State help in the distribution of wealth in a manner which increases national wealth as a whole. If taxes are drawn from the poor and expenditure enriches the well-to-do, the human value of the national dividend is not given the consideration which is its due. This applies in a special manner to a poor country like India where strictest economy is thus enjoined. Economy, however, does not signify that low prices are to be paid for articles because the Government may not look at its expenditure from the money point of view only. Locally made articles, even if they are more costly than the same from abroad, must be given preference for, in this way, the money will circulate in the province and the price will not affect the taxable capacity of the citizen. Wealth will be distributed and local enterprise encouraged, whereas if the foreign article is bought the purchasing power is transferred over a boundary line which obstructs a free flow of exchange. So long as the artificial barriers of Customs Duties, Control of Exchange, Freight Rates, etc. exist, it is impossible to expect the mutual good resulting from the free flow characteristic of a free market.

Today our economic goods are directed mainly by artificial means and ceaseless vigilance is required to find out how State expenditure may help the current of productivity of the people to flow. The Government that makes cheapness its criterion and purchases foreign articles lays itself open to the charge of creating unemployment within its jurisdiction because goods produced for consumption create employment in their

production. And then when goods are obtained from an outside province, the employment created by the demand for such goods is lost to the province. Therefore, the State can create employment or unemployment by the mode of its expenditure. However cheap the imported article may be, it is far too expensive from the point of view of employment, and the State that buys this is obviously doing disservice to its subjects.

### 3. *Capital and Labour Wealth*

Our economy differs considerably from that of the West. Their organisations are based on the presumption of capital being available in abundance. Prior to the Industrial Revolution boards were transferred from eastern countries, and ever since, their efforts have been towards reducing the labour cost of articles produced and increasing the returns to the middleman.

In our country a visit to any village will convince us that capital is scarce while labour is abundant. Therefore, any system of prosperity for us will be based on the fact of abundance of labour and not on the availability of capital. In the matter of Key Industries, Public Utilities, and in the exploitation of natural resources where large capital is required, the State must undertake such enterprises on behalf of the people. The standard, in no case, cannot, therefore, be used in the other. In our own case, we have to see that the equipment for the production of goods is the cheapest possible. Where the percentage of labour cost in an article is high, it indicates that distribution of wealth has taken place in the very production of that article.

A Government, generally speaking, is financed by

the annual productivity of the people which forms part of their income as against their capital. Often the durability of a foreign article draws the Government into indenting for such. This again, is a wrong principle in economics. What we require is that since the money that is drawn by the Government is contributed from the annual income of the people, the expenditures can also form a charge against revenue.

For example, throughout India even in the country side and jungle areas telegraph posts that dot the border of railway lines are made of steel while the country abounds in timber, and the metal used is foreign. Even in wealthy countries like America and England such posts are of wood. The only reason given in support is that the steel posts last longer, because wooden ones are destroyed by white ants and other insects. No State or Public Utility concern should advance such an argument for expenditures which are inimical to the interests of the country. If timber were used employment would be available to large numbers of people. Wooden poles would also be cheaper if less durable, and even if more frequent renewals are needed, the amount spent on such ones out of taxation is only made to circulate more frequently within the country. Ordinarily the State should not capitalise the revenue drawn from the people, for such action unnecessarily dams the current of circulation and a situation likely to lead to dire poverty is created. The people who pay the taxes can barely afford the mere necessities of life. Taking money from such and laying it by for the future is wrong financial policy. The proper thing to do is to utilise such a fund so that the amount spent falls more or less on the revenue rather than on the capital.

Another advantage of this policy is that if the asset wears out sooner the Government will have to go to the people again for money and thereby keep the transactions of the Government more clearly before the people. It is a very important check in dealing with public expenditures of a democratic institution: it curbs any tendency towards extravagance.

The committee suggest that every year, in every village, a statement should be issued showing how much income the Government has received therefrom and how much Government expenditures are allocated to the village concerned, and the same should be hung up there in prominent places like the school, the post office and the hospital.

There is an aspect of our economic order which is rarely understood and unless we bear it in mind will make it impossible for us to fit into the general background. In India, as we have already said, the industries which must have a wide base should be founded on labour rather than on capital. We may not disable our cottage and village industries to the extent of even making them compete with foreign articles made under methods of centralisation. A casual look round a village will reveal the fact that the houses of the needy poor are built of mud and thatch while the Sahukars' and Malguzars' will be found to be of brick and mortar and tiled. This is not only a sign of poverty; it is part of the economic order and denotes an adjustment to circumstances and environment over a period of centuries. If a pukka building needs repair, an outside mason has to be called in and paid for his labour whereas the cottager will plaster and mud his own mud-wall himself. Therefore, because material wealth is required to maintain brick houses they are often in disrepair

while even the Harijans can keep their house neat and clean because of their wealth in labour.

#### 4. *Money and Barter Economics*

In this connection we must state that the system of partial payment in kind, the payment of goods in terms of the unit which is available is also appropriate. Too great an emphasis has been laid on the use of money. This has been necessitated by the economic organisation in the West where articles from very great distance become primary needs for industries. The farther we go for raw material the greater the need for a money economy. This emphasis on money has placed the villager at the mercy of foreign salesmen by the extension of markets from which they bring their articles in a country which has not got the necessary power to control the environment best suited to it. Money is not a commodity which satisfies any primary need and man cannot live by it alone. It represents man's power to control the lives of others because the owner of money is on a foundation that differs from that of the possessor of the exchangeable article, and an exchange in commodities cannot take place when one person has the stronger bargaining power. Gold does not depreciate by itself, but most commodities for which it is exchanged depreciate inherently and with time. Therefore, if we introduce a money economy on a wide basis into the villages, we place the poor at the mercy of the rich. Whatever may be said in favour of metal as money, it certainly operates unfairly when the perishable is balanced against the non-perishable. The villagers should, therefore, be less dependent on world market and more on their own productive forces.

5. *Barter and Government Funds*

The tendency in this connection has been greatly to reduce the human value of the purchasing power taken from the people for Government expenses. Those who cannot afford the bare necessities of life have to support a heavily paid administration. Whenever the Committee were the guests of the villagers they slept on mud floors or verandahs or in the open spaces near the cattle in most insanitary conditions. This was not due to the inhospitality of the villagers—for the poor have large hearts—but their purses are small. Even a spare *charpai* was not available. Government funds are largely drawn from these people and spent in a way which has no relation to the source of revenue itself. In striking contrast were the carpeted and luxuriously fitted rooms in the Assembly Rest House, a building which has cost Rs. 1,32,000. Our M.L.A.s are the guests of hosts with an income of Rs. 15 p.a., and to call upon these to entertain in rooms costing Rs. 3,300 per member proves the anomaly of the situation. The putting up of palatial buildings alone brings about a decrease in the national wealth of the country in human values.

If revenues could, to some extent, be collected in kind, there would be some check in the fall of utility because the use of paddy or wheat collected by Government will be restricted to payment to officers locally and the difficulties of marketing these products will create a certain amount of friction in bringing the purchasing power from the villages to the cities. Though the expenses of collection may be heavy, the conservation of the marginal utility, especially in terms of human values will more than justify any administra-



tive difficulties. We do not recommend a complete system of barter, but we do feel that to a certain extent payment in kind, if properly schemed and worked, will relieve the distress of the people to an appreciable extent.

#### 6. *Raw Materials, Production and Profit*

Another fundamental consideration that is often lost sight of is the fact that, generally speaking, the labour spent on an article nearer its consumption stage pays for better returns than one which is nearer the raw material stage, because the principle of the ability to bear the charge operates. A consumable article sold for Rs. 100 can easily bear a profit of Rs. 5 whereas the raw materials of which this article is made which cost Rs. 10, though they may bear a profit of 8 annas in the same proportion, will not bear a profit of five rupees. An artisan, therefore, who works nearer the consumption stage of the article will receive a better return for his labour than one who works at the raw material stage. There will be people working at both stages within a limited area and, therefore, society as a whole will not suffer. But the present organisation is such that one set always works at consumable goods and one at the production of raw materials, with not only thousands of miles but all kinds of artificial barriers between them. The former group wins all along the line while the latter suffers from perpetual underpayment.

Export of raw materials is conducive to creation of unemployment and spread of poverty. Agriculture cannot, as a whole, pay so long as it is confined to the production of raw materials only. Every Govern-

ment should take into account what benefits society as a whole and should realise that food crops contribute very much more to the welfare of the nation while money or commercial crops, for purposes of export impoverish the people. During the last generation or so there has been an undue emphasis on money crops and the result faces us at every turn in the villages.

A farmer who cultivates money crops for factories is no better than a factory labourer. He loses his independence, he has little or no bargaining power, and he, therefore, gets the lowest of returns. Proverbially the former is a freedom-loving person, but when he deserts food crops or crops which he and his neighbours can convert into consumable goods, he leaves his traditional love of independence. The policy of our agricultural department has enhanced the evils attendant on this change. Its researches have been mainly directed towards commercial crops and this has been a short-sighted policy. For instance, various kinds of palm trees, though they abound and could be converted into sugar by cottage process, have been utterly neglected, while emphasis has been laid on the growing of sugarcane which requires intensive cultivation and good wheat lands, simply because it is a good raw material for mills. No time or thought has been expended on the field of production of consumable products. India is one of the largest oil seeds producers in the world, and yet the seeds are exported rather than converted into consumable products in spite of the need for such. If the market for finished goods from oil had been extended, we would easily have devised some kind of lamp for burning vegetable oils rather than importing, as we do, thousands of gallons of kerosene oil.

### 7. *Administrative or Creative Efficiency*

We have to draw attention to the fact that under the plea of efficiency Government has tied itself into a knot. After certain limits efficiency even becomes harmful. Officials of senior rank are burdened with routine work which could be done by office boys. There is no room for either planning or initiative. "Administrative efficiency" with all its red tape has reached the stage of petrification while creative faculties have been frozen to death. No risks and no gains, that is the policy that seems to be ruling governmental expenditure today.

### 8. *Impediment to Production*

With great eagerness to raise funds for the Government all manner of taxes have been levied at all stages of production without regard to the result that such impediments to production will bring about. The nearer the incidence is to the raw material, the greater the leverage to the impediment. Eight annas per unit charged at the point where raw materials are collected at the early stages is likely to stop the possibility of a much greater tax at the consumable stage. But the present system has valued the golden egg and killed the goose. Not only are Government taxes crushing industries but malguzars and local bodies have joined in to make the burden intolerable. A note of warning must be sounded, for the burdens are now reaching a point where disaster will soon come if immediate steps are not taken to rectify the error. Malguzari exactions must be carefully examined and legislation, if necessary, should be introduced to safeguard

the people from such.

The financed organisation of municipalities in the larger villages is anything but scientific. The main idea is the collection of revenue. Many industries are being killed by thoughtless octroi duties and terminal taxes. The same applies to the large district towns also. The villagers are ignorant and do not understand the full implications of the taxes they pay; even overpayments are common through ignorance. It is up to the Government to examine scientifically the system of taxes and to make sure that none of these at least harm village industries even if they cannot be helpful.

The tendency of the taxes again has been to increase the cost of raw materials. The taxes, detached from the condition of the industry, may not be heavy, but the incidence and the point at which they are levied are wrongly placed.

Bazaars in most villages are stocked full of foreign goods. This is a clear indication of the extent to which employment in our own country has suffered from the exploitation of the opportunities of production by foreign countries. If municipalities were to levy high sales taxes on these goods which are imported into the village instead of taxing locally made articles, they would probably be doing a service. Even articles supplying primary needs are now being imported into the villages. The more these come in, the less employment will there be. The organisation of the movement of goods requires intelligent guidance. These are functions which naturally fall to the department of industries. In villages, at any rate, foreign goods should be the exception rather than the rule but the reverse almost holds good today. A careful scrutiny

as to which articles are harmful to village economy is, therefore, essential.

Let us summarise these paragraphs in a few words. The report draws up a very lucid contrast between the economics of our country with the economics of the West. In the West capital is abundant and the one object is to reduce the labour cost of articles produced and increase the returns to the middleman. Whereas in our country capital is scarce while labour is abundant. A Government is financed generally by the annual productivity of the people which forms part of their income as against their capital. Government in India must recognise that since the money that is drawn by the Government is contributed from the annual income of the people, the expenditures can also form a charge against revenue. For instance, what is the reason for importing steel telegraph posts from abroad when you can have wooden telegraph posts in India? Is it not a fact that in America and England, such posts are of wood? It is so in Sweden and Norway. That wood decays is no argument, for wood grows constantly in our forests. There is a fine economic side to the housing. If a pukka building needs repair, it costs much more than to repair a mud house. That is why the labour of the villagers is valuable. The mud houses of the villagers are much more neat and clean than the so-called brick houses. Money is not a commodity which satisfies any primary need and man cannot live by it alone. It is a commodity which has been introduced from abroad. No one knows it multiplies at one place and be scarce at another. The monopolies of currency and of exchange lead to variations of money in the market or a rise or a fall in prices—conditions which readily distribute the tranquillity of

the market. Therefore, one object of rural economy must be to replace money by Barter system. If we introduce money economy, it means placing the poor at the mercy of the rich. It certainly operates unfairly when the perishable is balanced against the non-perishable. A fundamental consideration that is often lost sight of is the fact that, generally speaking, the labour spent on an article nearer its consumption stage pays far better returns than one which is nearer the raw material stage, because the principle of the ability to bear the charge operates. A man who works nearer the consumption stage of the article will receive a better return for his labour than one who works at the raw material stage. The result is that one group wins all along the line while the other groups suffer from perpetual underpayment. Export of raw materials is conducive to creation of unemployment and spread of poverty. A farmer who cultivates money crops for factories is no better than a factory labourer. The commercial crops have received more attention of the eyes of agricultural department than purely food crops or industrial crops. The palm tree has been neglected. Sugarcane which requires intensive cultivation has received greater attention because it is a good raw material for mills. Efficiency has become the one God at the shrine of which, the department (Government) worships forgetting the fact "after certain limits efficiency even becomes harmful by the heavy overrate charges." "Administrative efficiency with all its red tape has reached the stage of petrification while creative faculties have been frozen to death."

The Report has revealed astounding figures regarding the annual income of the villager after a survey of 606 villages that the average income of the villager

per head was no more than Rs. 12/-. We have been taught by politicians and administrators that the annual income of an Indian is anything between Rs. 65 to Rs. 80. But it must be remembered that the figure of 65 to 80 is an all-India average which includes the income of millionaires, middlemen and zamindars. In even skilled industries such as weaving, people are not able to get more than 50 to 70 rupees per annum per family. If our industries are not industrial industries, how can the diet be balanced? The food cannot even be of rice or grain in fact but is made up of gruel prepared with broken rice—the liquid form being preferred as it fills the stomach. In addition, polished rice has come into existence with all its horrors—economic and medical. One rice-mill takes away the food of 7,000 stomachs. The ginning mill takes away the livelihood of 90 families or 400 stomachs a day, and the weaving mill of one thousand families a day or 5,000 stomachs and another 200 families or 1000 stomachs of other allied crafts. If the villages are to be restored to life, they must have their livelihood restored. Even potatoes are coming from Italy and apples from Japan let alone wheat from Australia and broken rice from Siam. Taxes are collected during the slack season instead it must be considered whether paddy should not be taken leading to the collection of kind not cash. Adolescent education is talked about much and the radio is in request but all these will not fill the stomach of the people.

New ideas are not taken to the villagers. New tools and implements are not supplied. There is no living contact between the officials and the leaders of villages. It is not magic lantern lectures that enlighten people's minds but it is the actual working out of small

industries from the beginning to the end, demonstrating how they afford employment and means of livelihood to the starving millions. Money is being spent upon officials who consume large bulk of the revenues. In the Central Province whose income is Rs. 4.75 crores, the expenses of collection and a top-heavy administration takes Rs. 3.65 crores leaving barely over a crore for constructive work. What constructive work can be done in villages which have no roads worth the name, no hospitals, no veterinary aid, no postal service, no educational facilities, no sanitary arrangements, no protection from infectious diseases and no water supply. The radio is not the remedy. The village industries alone can give a morsel of food to these starving millions. The very water that people drink, is charged with excrementitious matter. The collateral industries supporting agriculture such as roap-making are being replaced by articles from abroad. The committee has noted the following industries as village industries that must be attended to: "Paddy-husking, flour-grinding, oil-pressing, gur-making, sugar manufacture, bee-keeping, pottery, glass-work, soap-making, cotton processes (i.e., picking, ginning, carding, spinning, weaving, washing, dyeing) wool spinning, wool weaving, sheep-breeding, carpentry, smithy, seri-culture, mat-weaving, rope-making, tanning, disposal of carcasses, pisciculture, poultry breeding, dairy farming, shoe-making, brass and metal wares, toy-making, goldsmithy, paper-making, transport, lac industry, bamboo match-manufacture, and bidi making.



*Bullock Carts*

“Animal power is not costlier than machine power in fields or short distance work and hence can compete with the latter in most cases. The present-day tendency is towards discarding animal power in preference to machine power.

Take for example a bullock-driven cart, costing Rs. 100 and Rs. 200 for the bullocks. The bullocks can drive the cart at least 15 miles per day with a load of 16 Bengal maunds on rough sandy village roads. This service will cost Re. -/12/- for two bullocks, Re. -/6/- for the cartman and Re. -/4/- for cart depreciation, in total Rs. 1/6/- per day. A one-ton motor lorry will cost for 15 miles at least one gallon of petrol, some lubricating oil, huge repair and upkeep expenses, and a costly driver. For 15 miles' run the lorry will cost Rs. 1/12/- for petrol including lubricating oil, Re. -/12/- for maintenance at the rate of Rs. 6 per day of eight hours' service, and Re. -/8/- for the driver, cleaner and extra men required to load and empty the lorry. Hence the total cost is Rs. 2-12- i.e., Rs. 1-6- per cartload of 16 Bengal maunds. One bullock cart is able to carry 7 to 8 cartloads of manure in one day from the village site to the field which is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile away and will cost only Rs. 1/6/- plus Re. -/6/- for the extra man required to help the cartman to fill and empty the cart. While a motor lorry to do this job will not cost in any way less. A motor lorry may compete when it has to carry loads at a stretch for a long distance on a good metal road, where bullock carts seem too slow and uneconomical. It is also not desirable to take animals to long distances at one stretch as it tells much upon their energy and strength.”

## CHAPTER XIV

### EDUCATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

#### *National Education*

The march of events at the present day is unique in character and revolutionary in speed. Just as we are not able to mark the growth of muscle and the change of lineaments of our own children though we watch them,—but really because we watch them—from day to day and minute to minute,—even so we are unable to take a full view of the rapid and wholesale changes in ideology, in social structure, in civic institutions and in the thousand and one details which we sum up in that one word—progress,—which have been taking place during the past half a century before our very eyes. The fact is—to quote a familiar saying—we miss the wood in the trees.

This general observation is as true of the constructive departments of national life as of the fighting aspects of Indian politics. The latter figure in the lime-light and attract attention, the former are unobtrusive in character and remain unnoticed and not seldom, unknown. We say so because a study of the work of the Hindustanee Talimi Sangh, fills us with dismay at the vast field covered during the first three years of its career. The ideas inaugurated by Gandhi are nothing new in the field of education any more than they are novel in the domain of economics, ethics or

politics all of which he has presented in his own light to a wonderstruck world. When you treat a disease, you have to determine the principles on which the treatment must be based. He who prescribes a drug for each symptom is perilously near becoming a charlatan and quack. He who diagnoses the disease and marks out his course of treatment on certain definite principles, is on the high road to success. What is the malady to which India is subjected? Is it the supercession of the village by the town, of crafts by mills, of swadeshi by alien goods, of indigenous culture by foreign *Kultur*, of self-sufficiency by quest for markets and raw materials, of contented nationalism by grabbing Imperialism, of justice by law, of arbitration by the uncertainties of litigation, of truthfulness by the prevarications of the Law Court, of duties by rights, of unity by discord, of abstinence by intoxication, of co-operation by competition, of preservation of life and happiness by mutual slaughter and a thirst for blood? All these are symptoms of the malady. The disease itself is the supremacy of violence over non-violence. Hence the whole technique of Gandhism is expressed in a constructive programme which is the obverse of his fighting or destructive programme. If we may briefly describe his constructive programme, it is no more, no less, than non-violence in action. Here it may take the shape of a renovated scheme of basic education, there a revived plan of economic uplift through Khaddar, elsewhere it may be a rejuvenated attempt at national unity through the removal of untouchability. All these are non-violence in action because the foreign articles we use, starve our poor fellow creatures in the villages, all the social disparities injure the very honour and self-respect of our Hari-

jan brethren and all the educational labours of the prevailing system reconcile the mind to the rule of the foreigner and tend to consolidate his moral and social conquest of the nation along with his political or territorial conquest.

### *The Child and the Nation*

Education is the science and art of relating the development of the child to the needs of the nation,—of making the youth of the country as some would say, suitable parts of the mechanism of society. Each child that is born is not the property of the parents or the prop of the family but is the asset of the whole nation, and its training must naturally be attuned to national needs and ideals.. What are these ideals? They are not common to the West and the East. In the West they are out for power, for the promotion of their industries which require raw materials at one end and markets for the sale of finished products at the other. They naturally require political ascendancy to ensure the preservation and perpetuation of their industrial competence. All this in time of peace or while other nations peacefully agree to fall victims to the aggressions of their neighbours. When they don't do so there is war—for which preparations must be going on during peace time. Thus while all war must end in peace, all peace is apprehended to presage war and is a preparation for it. And the youth of the ruling countries must be trained in the arts of imperialism while the youth of the countries ruled over must be taught the art of submitting to the needs of their foreign rulers. It is here that conflict arises between the ruling nations and the nations ruled in respect of

successful correlation of the training given to the youth to the ideals of the Nation.

### *The University of Life*

It is in the open air, in the academy of events, in the class-room of human conversation, in the companionship of a few good books freely chosen and above all in the discipline of plain work done in a noble spirit, that the vast bulk of our populace must win that high sagacity, that intelligent courage, that royal self-mastery which make them men fit to stand among princes and tower above them. It is time that we disavowed the narrow academic heresies of our present day Universities, the idolatry of system. Let them realize that good methods must bow before fine results, that learning is the handmaid of wisdom, that character is the jewel and culture is but the setting and that the supreme aim of all Education—formal or informal is to make men who can see clearly and imagine vividly, think soundly and *will* nobly, plan quickly and act faithfully for their country's service. A nation that holds this faith and lives up to it will surely keep through all the current, as well as through all the coming changes and conflicts, the love and loyalty of its millions, and pass untarnished to posterity the proud name of Hindustan which has held its head high amongst the cultured nations of the world now for at least thirteen thousand years. That is the Gandhian ideal of Education,—an ideal embodying itself in a people, a creed heated white hot in the furnace of conviction and hammered into shape on the anvil of life, a vision commanding men to follow it whither-so-ever it may lead them. And it is the subordination of the per-

sonal self to that ideal, that creed, that vision which gives eminence and glory to Gandhi and perhaps, one of these days, and also to some of the men who stand with him. We are sick of the shallow judgment which ranks the worth of a man by his degrees or his property or his wealth at death. The true test of a man is this. Has he laboured for his own interest or for the general welfare? What does his education mean to him—a personal advantage over his fellowmen or a personal opportunity for serving them?

The problem of National Education may well be studied in its relation to Economic and National Culture. We shall deal with the former first.

### I—*Economic Aspect*

Each age, each era and epoch witnesses some controversy or other which is acute in character and divides people into sharply divided camps. There was the age of personal and despotic rule, the era of medievalism and feudalism, the epoch of nationalism. These broad features translate themselves into various local or departmental activities and give rise in turn to further divisions into strata or sections or schools of thought whether people should be for consumption or for export, whether business should be pursued for service or for profits, whether art could be divorced from Industry, whether machinery can be an aid to Art or a hindrance to it, whether knowledge and learning are the essential conditions pre-requisite to Art, whether Education like worship, should be individual, or congregational, whether schools should be independent and free or centralized and regimented, whether examinations are an inevitable asset or are an inescap-

able curse, whether recruitment to services or selection in matrimony should be guided by passes and degrees, whether life is happier under the guidance of Law and public opinion or under the inspiration of one's conscience and inner voice,—these are some of the common themes that engage the leisure hours of men and women and confront the statesmen, politicians, educationists, social reformers, economists and men of science. We, Congressmen, are also called upon to consider some of these burning topics and one of them is how to reorganize our education.

### *Literacy and Culture*

In answering this question we must at once disabuse our mind of the common notion that the '*unparh*' are uneducated or that the '*Likhe Parhe log*' are cultured. In India we have the strange fact that some of the highest Pandits and Ulemahs are illiterate, that knowledge is acquired orally not by '*Chakshu vakshara sam-yogam*' (the contact of the eye with the alphabet). Literacy is not essential to culture. This is how for ages Indian learning has been preserved and perpetuated. Not alone learning but culture has been spread throughout the country by this process of handing it down from sire to son. Every home is a school, every father is a teacher. Every cottage is a work-shop. Every day's work is apprenticeship. Every process is an examination. Every product is a degree and every artisan thus becomes a graduate in the University of life, in the class-room of human craft or conversation and in the company of a few well-chosen masters of learning or arts.

In a country like ours, Syllabusses, have been

introduced based upon a dull monotony of studies—the same for all aptitudes, and all tastes, all grades of intellect, all strata of society, all parts of the country, all degrees of civilization, all needs of life. It is not Education but Regimentation, not Culture but Cramming, not Examination but Gambling, not Passes but Prizes. And then? A void all round, a huge chasm everywhere, a bottomless abyss below, an impalpable nothingness above. We have spent eighty years exactly on these lines since the Universities were established and how long more shall we suffer this weary waste, this lopsided, pursuit?

### *Life and Learning*

We learn every day in our lives, the moment we are born. The first thing we have learnt without striving is to breathe, then to smile unaccountably, next to cry for food, later to roll about in the cradle and finally to sit and stand and walk and run and fall and rise and jump and play. The three year old baby not merely lisps but talks in complex sentences. The five year old child argues and trips you. The seven years old imp questions you on scientific phenomena and silences you. The ten year child thinks and originates; the fourteen year adolescent works and produces; the eighteen year craftsman is already able to make furniture and articles of need, design and execute artistic works, beautify homes and paint landscapes, draw portraits, weave fabrics make jewellery, beautify surroundings, cook food, nurse patients, build houses, manufacture implements, grow crops, raise gardens, tend cattle, plough, sow, weed and reap.



*Vocational Bias*

Oh—the thousand and one vocations, arts, crafts and callings,—who teaches these things, who declares the passes and failures, who punishes and rewards? The home, the parents, the mistri, the foreman, the master-weaver, the guilds, it is these that have kept the glories of Indian culture in its protean forms intact. What, therefore, is wanted to-day is a system of schools and seminaries wherein this old bias for arts and crafts, for manufacture and production, for beauty and harmony—bias by which develops that power, which combines art with utility and weaves the former into every implement and vessel that the latter requires. It is thus that a huge co-operative society was constituted of the whole social structure—indeed a Federation of co-operative organisations of which each joint family was a labour unit. Thus was India made self-sufficient and too, almost every village thereof. That was the only means of warding off the problem of unemployment which follows as night follows day, the mass production of the modern day on the monster machines of the West.

The future of India, therefore, is a vital factor in the reorganisation of Education. What shall we educate the youth for? For an age of competitive production? No, for self-sufficiency. If so the training to be given to the youth of the country must implant in them that bias for cottage industries by which alone self-sufficiency can extend itself to the remotest corners of India,—its districts, tahsils and villages. It is this kind of education that is aimed at under the Wardha scheme the ideals of which will unfold themselves to the doubting public and to the hostile departments

only as time advances even as Khaddar and its cult are coming on as a revelation to the officers of Government to-day after these eighteen years of cynical opposition on their own part.

### *The New Order*

Khaddar points to a new direction in Economics. Economics and Education act and react upon each other. When, therefore, Khaddar and the village industries have come to stay, there must be concurrent and corresponding change in the system of education adopted by the Congress. The old system of education to which the Wardha scheme is offered as a corrective must be rapidly replaced for the same reason for which the system of economics of the Britisher to which his system of Education has been a hand-maid is yielding place to a new system of economic organisation. Let there be no mistake about it. We are really on the eve of wholesale changes under which the old order has, lock, stock and barrel, to be turned out and a new order in every walk of life has to be initiated and established.

Our difficulty is the predilections still of our Ministers and our permanent department heads for the older ideals. They are the products of a hostile system. They cannot be otherwise than what they are. Their conferences and their resolutions should, therefore, be rated at their own worth. When Satyagraha was projected we had to do uphill work. When the task of reconstruction is taken on hand in accordance with the logical results of Satyagraha we are called upon to swim against the current and the day may not be far off when the Wardha scheme schools also will have been

accepted not as mere demonstration centres but as real pioneers in the great programme of national reconstruction which, call it Economic, call it Educational, is one and indivisible.

## II—*The Cultural Aspect*

People naturally ask why we still speak of national education and what exactly we mean by it at this stage when Congress ministers control the departments. Yes, this is true. But the control is nominal. The Ministers are only in office and do not exercise full power. The real powers are all in the hands of the Departmental Heads who are not fully or even partly amenable to the discipline, nor share the impulses and the inspirations that guide or should guide our Ministers. We are still moving in the same old track very much like a gin horse moving round and round in a circle but never moving a step further. To-day we have not been able to impart instruction through the medium of the mother tongue from the beginning right up to the end of the school course. To-day the craze for examinations is as intense as ever before. To-day the passion for a purely literary education which carries us nowhere, which qualifies the young men for unemployment and which is being pursued with a pious faith worthy of a better cause, holds the field and fascinates teachers, pupils and parents, alike. Having created unemployment deliberately at great expense we raise the universal cry that the country is suffering from unemployment. To-day the bias of the youthful mind is still towards University education which it should be towards an industry, or craft or trade by which they can lead an honourable livelihood. But

then we are confronted with the question what industry, calling or trade can we train our boys up for. This ultimately is the problem of national education affecting the youth of the country and is much the same as the problem of national emancipation affecting the citizens of the country. Unless there is complete freedom there cannot be full scope for the exercise of commercial, industrial and technical privileges required for the promotion of national prosperity, unless in other words, the country is wholly self-governing without any industrial and commercial safeguards, unless India has 'Purna Swaraj' the problem of the conservation of Indian wealth and the promotion of Indian well-being which really are the objectives of National Education cannot be attacked in all its multifarious aspects to any advantage whatever. Nevertheless our efforts must be of a simultaneous character directed on the one hand towards the emancipation of the country from the thralldom of the foreign yoke and the bondage of foreign commerce and of foreign industry. To this end we must generate in the minds of our youth a passion for culture which is indigenous, for crafts and arts which are calculated to promote the prosperity of the country. Herein lies the key to the problem of national education. This is the real bother with the British conquest of India which is not merely political but commercial, cultural and spiritual. It has been to the interests of the Britishers in India to cast the youthful mind into moulds of their own pattern, and produce models of a pro-British type. Accordingly the youth of the country has been taught to revel in a knowledge of English, in English Degrees, titles, positions, preferments and pensions, taught to take real delight in talking in a foreign language, writ-

ing letters home in English and sending marriage invitations in English. The passion for the language of the conqueror—the language adopted in the courts, colleges, and councils, in which all orders, Government rules, regulations, standing orders are communicated, this irrepressible rage to talk with one another in English has possessed the people of all grades and classes and come to be regarded as the hall-mark and crucial test of culture. It is difficult for us to persuade our friends to talk in their mother-tongue in the legislatures, in the courts and in the colleges. We have been arguing that a university can be conducted through the medium of the mother-tongue, that provinces should be carved out on a language basis and that it would conduce to better administration of Justice in the country to carry on proceedings of the courts in the language intelligible to the clients. It does not strike us as odd that a foreign language should be adopted for these purposes.

### *Art Treasures*

While this is the position in so far as language is concerned, the position in regard to culture is even worse. We have been taught to believe that there are no paintings in this country, that art did not exist and that light must emanate from the West and not from the East. The passion for the reproduction of things in a realistic style eclipses that other passion for spiritual art. Architecture itself has undergone a tremendous change in the country. Old styles that have served to beautify the cities of Jaipur and Udaipur, Delhi and Agra, Bijapur and Aurangabad, Tanjore and Madura have disappeared and are thought lightly of.

Ancient temple architecture, sculptures, and paintings have not been studied but neglected. Even now the Ministers have not thought it worth while spending say five thousand rupees for the popularisation of these sculptures and paintings. As for the manuscripts in the Tanjore library which are apt to decay by centuries of neglect there is no knowing when they will be re-suscitated. A huge and strenuous effort will have to be made in order to transcribe all these manuscripts and make available to the public the storehouse of knowledge that lies embedded in the seeming debris of palm leaves and decaying paper. The Provincial Governments are yet to spend an extra rupee on this noble task.

### *Indian architecture*

Go where you will, the grandeur and glory of the ancient crafts is there untarnished and unscathed by age or by the vandalism of the foreigner. Where shall we begin? Where shall we end in studying these marvels? In a rapid survey of these vast monuments of ancient idealism worked out in stone and brick and colour extending over centuries of toil of incessant character. Starting with the Kulasekhara Mandap and the hardly visible paintings that lie upon the ceilings of the temples in Trivandrum and proceeding to the massive architecture of Madura and the exquisitely delicate sculptures of Tanjore, and from there proceeding to Halibede and Belur where work in stone remains the great wonder of the country recalling the filigree work of Bhoj in Cutch done on gold and silver, making a comparative study of the magnificent bull in Tanjore, Mysore, and Belur and Halibede, we begin to wonder how long these works must have taken

to complete and what vast treasures must have been consumed by them. At Lepakshi the ceiling of the temple is full of beautiful paintings which are preserved intact though they are four or five hundred years old and in which the most stirring scenes of the lives of the kings and saints are rendered into colour and form. Besides these, there are the architectural marvels at Lepakshi of pillars huge in dimension, hanging from the ceiling without resting on the ground and pillars revolving. Tadapatri and Penugonda are full of temples which bear testimony to the amount of labour and money that must have been spent upon art and architecture at one time, and to the comparative ruin into which they have fallen in recent years owing to the culpable neglect of those who hold authority to-day. For oldness of design, for neatness of execution, for intense love of detail and the highest purity of workmanship, for energy and expressiveness, for the blending of scientific curiosity with architectural beauty, for the execution of these most exquisite paintings and sculptures in the darkest corners of the temples which are hardly visible to the human eye, these various institutions hold the first place in India. In Belur and Halibede stone pillars of the Mandaps have only to be moistened with a wet cloth in order to present the most curious phenomena of reflection and refraction, of the objects roundabout, the reflections and refractions seen in one differing entirely from those seen in another. The magnificent form of Virabhadraswamy inside the temple at Lepakshi which is utterly dark has to be seen only with the aid of a fierce electric searchlight and even so in parts because from end to end it is 35 feet long. Travelling further west, we go to Bijapur with its magnificent dome and its whispering gallery

we have too the caves of Badami in Kanadadesa and Undavalli in Andhra which have been recently discovered. We ask in wonderment whether the whispering properties of the Bijapur dome were designed or accidental, even as we ask about the refraction effects on the pillars of Belur and Halibede. The magnificent temple architecture and the caves and sculptures at Ellora and Ajanta of which H. E. H. the Nizam is the fortunate possessor, and above all the caves of Elephanta whose proportions defy imagination stand by themselves. Look at the 27 caves of Ajanta taking seven centuries to construct and say who can imagine the amount of money that must have been spent on them. The idol of Kesava Jaganmohini at Ryali (East Godavari) holds its own against any sculpture in India. It is a jewel in stone. Money is no consideration in their preparation. Imagine the measure of service that was put into it. The artist and the craftsman did not execute their work by plans and estimates, by tenders and contracts, by bills and time limits. They poured out their souls into song and stone and colour, and then revelled in the execution of their work. It was their own self-realisation, not their enrichment that they aimed at, in ancient days. Knowledge was not a thing that was put up for sale. Books did not form the subject of a trade. The gain of money was not a qualification to the possession of culture and learning. Travelling further North we go to Ahmednagar, where the shaking towers in the mosque fill us with admiration. There are two of these at a distance of 40 ft., each with a diameter of 6 ft. If you thump one from inside it shakes, setting up a sympathetic shake in the other. One of these towers was demolished and rebuilt by the British Research Engineers but the



shaking has disappeared. There are other curiosities in Ahmedabad. The great well there is a marvel in itself. The lofty stone images of Gomateswara at Sravanabelagula in Mysore is not merely a marvel but a miracle. Finally we come to the glories of Agra and the Delhi Palaces and the great mausoleum which has been described as a dream in marble. The Taj which for its loveliness, for the delicacy of its taste and its attention to detail, for the labour that it involved and the imagination that lay at its root, staggers all attempts to unravel its secrets. Mount Abu abounds in its own beauties of architecture and sculpture and so does Anritsar in its golden temple. Only you have a rival in Ajanta—conceived in broad sweeps and wide curves and possessing a magnificence and magnitude which are unparalleled in the country. Proceeding to the East we come across the temples at Jagannath and Bhuvaneswar and Kanrack which belong to a category of their own.

What was the origin of this knowledge, where did all this inspiration spring from? Where are the scholars that designed them, where are the workmen that executed them? The study of all these matters constitutes the programme of real National Education. We witness the same marvels in the domain of medicine, painting, poetry and drama. Our drama is at least 800 years older than the English Drama. In the domain of medicine and surgery our ancestors made progress thousands of years ago to the degree attained by western scholars and scientists only six decades back.

*Unravel the Secrets of these Sciences and Arts*

We have to unravel the secrets of these sciences

and arts, of these various departments of Engineering, Medicine, Law and Literature. That would be the real national education. As graduates of a National University our duty in life would be not merely to pursue the careers for which we have qualified ourselves, but to pursue the investigation of those fields of knowledge and learning which had attained a high degree of excellence in olden days, but which came to a stop in progress centuries ago. A country under foreign domination suffers for want of royal or state patronage as much in the domain of culture and arts, as in the region of social laws and civic institutions and in the sphere of pure politics. The King is not merely the embodiment of luxury and self-indulgence, nor an instrument for the maintenance of Law and Order, but is the head of society and monitor and mentor to his people in matters based upon custom and tradition. He is the first citizen of the State. Where custom becomes rigid and sets into established and unchangeable practice progress ceases. Under the foreign rulers India had suffered this set-back not only in customary law, but in various other social matters on account of the unwillingness of the rulers to interfere with authority and tradition in society. The ancient embodiment of popular will has become a mere vestige of the past if not altogether vanished out of existence. Thus has custom become petrified and knowledge and learning begun to stagnate. With the onslaught of foreign civilization not only do new fashions and new styles come into vogue but the old knowledge is derided and made the victim of prejudice or even cavil. The channels along which the currents of knowledge, learning and research, have coursed along for centuries, suddenly suffer a set-back by the onrush of counter

and cross currents impinging against them with the result that not only do they not progress but they become dried up and covered over with the debris and the accretions of decades. Our duty under the circumstances is to dig up the debris and find out the degree to which progress had advanced unchecked in its ancient march and the methods by which that progress had reached that degree of excellence, for really, 'A University' as Prof. Walter Raleigh has said, 'is an institution for guarding the inheritance of knowledge... It rehandles all fundamental conceptions and revises these. It begins from the beginnings and builds from the foundation. It raises fresh crops by turning over the old soil. It is constantly vigilant on the frontiers of knowledge.' The impediment to such lines of progress arises both from ignorance and from vested interests. Where Universities have made examinations the be-all and end-all of life, even detached admissions of administrators, educationists and businessmen regarding the inutility, and the mischievousness of the prevailing system of education have not succeeded in securing relief from their tyranny. The boys pursue them in ignorance, the parents under inertia and the teachers under a self-wardness. The Ministers who may be in charge of education are themselves the products of an effete system, subject to the philistinism that stands foursquare against progress. The impact of modern ideas and modern culture has so far denationalized our leaders of thought in the country that they fail to recognise the elementary, even as it is the fundamental, law of all progress—namely that the civilization of a nation is one continuous stream of culture—past, present and future, and that every nation marches from the past by the present to the future.

The past lives in the present and the present heralds the future. All our canons of morality and codes of ethics, are but the blend of ideas of different eras,—the resultant of various forces operating in various directions. The same reasoning would make our civilization not merely a blend of the past and the present but also of the East and the West. In an age where intercourse between nations is not merely commercial but cultural as well, the civilization of the day should be many-sided and multifaceted, from each of the faces and facets of which emanate the scintillations of the different cultures, that make up the whole blend. Naturally the present-day leaders are still under the glamour of their new culture which has made them what they are and until their minds should be developed on proper lines, the national institutions should continue to play their humble part, removed from all limelight in the umbras and penumbras of their nationalism and keep alive the torch of introspection in the hope that the day will not be far when the light which has guided them through all vicissitudes may lighten the path of the nation in its march to its national destiny.

## CHAPTER XV

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

In India we have various orders wedded to social service. The Vivekananda Mutt and the Ramkrishna Mission subserve the needs of the Hindus in the domains of religion, education and culture. Gokhale has started forty years ago the 'Servants of India Society,' composed of an order of educated men who have pinned their faith to poverty and service, but who have not been interdicted to their political ambitions. Nor has the 'Servants of the People Society' started more than two decades later by that distinguished scholar and savant of the Punjab—Lala Lajpat Rai, which has a commendable role of cultured membership, imposed any such self-denying ordinances upon the members. Gandhi has in his turn chosen to be the founder of a new order and make himself the first servant thereof. In doing so, he has broadened his range of vision and widened the receptivity of his heart. He is the "foremost amongst the servants of humanity" and his cult is

अयींजो परो वेति  
गणना लघु चेतसां  
उद्धार चरितानां तु,  
वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्

"To the common minds, *this* is kin and *that* is stranger. Those with a generous impulse make the

world their home." At the same time he has not lost himself in the tangle of universal brotherhood. All nationalism is only a step to cosmopolitanity and fraternity itself would be a myth if those bound together—whether individuals or nations are not animated by a sense of equality and fellowship. In this view, Gandhi's demand of complete independence for India must be understood as having been put forth by him in order that India may qualify herself for a place amongst the comity of the world's nations—not that she may be isolated on the one hand or on the other, employ her new-born status for designs upon other nations. To this end he would obliterate the jars and mutual recriminations in the country, the conflict of faiths and the rivalry of communities, the depression of a fifth of the population which has served not only as a taint on Indian nationalism but as a blot on humanity and a sin against God, exalt Indian womanhood once again to the altitudes she had once occupied as the real inspirer of man to acts of sacrifice and uplift, and the obliteration of those social evils—such as the professional prostitute as a hereditary class, the demon of drink with its occasional religious and customary sanctions and the disparities of status based upon birth. The "meanest" of men evoke his sympathy and helpfulness and no better proof can be afforded of this than by his statement that in his next birth he would like to be born an untouchable.

When people fall in their lives it is the duty of those who are in a better condition to raise them but this cannot be done except by stooping to lift. The drowning man cannot be saved by your sitting upon your own heights. You must yourself dip down in order to rescue him. Not seldom did Gandhi feel that he

was left alone by his immediate followers, and that his most trusted disciples had abandoned him. He did not grow cynical, he did not lost heart. He immediately dipped down to their level. Having done that, he once again lifted them up. This is how a leader works. He is a leader that can reconcile idealism with realism. He who is always simmering in the heights of his own ideals feels depressed constantly by any measures of compromise bordering almost on the corrosion of the ideals and corruption of the morals, which characterise the actualities of the world around him.

### *Untouchability*

To consider a fifth of the population of India as untouchable has been for ages India's one cause that amply justifies her present thralldom under an alien power. If after 13,000 years, the Aryan settlers in India have not been able to absorb these seventy million of God's creation, how can the Hindus blame Britain for regarding these 350 millions of India as untouchable, unapproachable, unclubbable, unassociable. Reformers there have arisen from time to time who condemned this age-long custom which is not merely a taint against nationalism but a sin against God. It has been given to Gandhi to make its abolition a cardinal plank in the Congress platform, taking an equal place with Khaddar, communal unity and prohibition.

The removal of untouchability is not a new idea but its absorption into the political programme as one of the three main constituents of its constructive side is a new feature. Indeed no single item of Gandhiji's programme of constructive reform is a new dis-

covery except the revival of hand-spinning. But it is the assemblage of an economic, a social and an ethical item that makes the programme the discovery of the age. During his whirl-wind tours throughout the country he has been approached to bring relief to the distressed and the distress of different people has been found to be different in character. At one place it was the fallen sister that sought his grace and at another it was the untouchable. Here it was the helpless families of the drunkard and the debauchee, there it was the starving children of the destitute. The sight of distress to his right and to his left, to his front and to his back did not fill him with despair or drive him to a philosophy of inaction or penance in forests. But like the man that he is, every inch a man, he set about thinking out and devising measures of relief to the fallen and the untouchable, to the starving and the naked, to the drunken and the debauched. His thoughts and experiences have resulted in a series of remedies and the evolution of a formula which has been accepted as a composite constructive programme for the nation. This is the genesis of the removal of untouchability.

### *The Background*

Over a century ago Raja Ram Mohan Roy had laboured in this cause and the banner that he held aloft has been kept flying by his successors—especially those who have been running the Brahmo Samaj—scores of instances exist in which Harijan girls have been rescued and Harijan boys have been brought up and both have grown up into honest citizens living a happy and healthy life. No great movement springs up all of a sudden without a background and these detached instances



occurring here and there in India now and then, over a century have added strength to a programme of socio-religious reform initiated earlier by saints like Ramanuja. All these constitute the rich heritage of the present generation and inspiration to a leader like Gandhi who has evolved a socio-political programme, giving a prominent place to social and economic uplift of the so-called untouchable classes whom he has re-named 'Harijans.'

A remarkable wave has spread over the whole country and what is really of importance is not a catalogue of achievements but the spirit which has permeated the land from Himalayas to Cape Comorin as the result of the new programme of the Congress. The spirit of helpfulness, and the recognition of the duty of the Savarnas to the Avarnas has covered a wide range of activities. Scholarships for high school students, institutions for vocational training such as shoe-making, tailoring, tanning, carpentry, weaving, homoeopathy, ayurveda, mat-making, printing, rattan-work, tinning and tinkering, preparatory schools, hostels for students, medical relief centres, medical examination of Harijans and sinking new wells for them, employment of Harijans in factories, commercial firms, shops and homes of caste Hindus and as newspaper vendors and training them as barbers and dhobis for Savarnas, supply of bullocks to Harijan villages and increase of Harijan labourers, wages, library service, akharas and social clubs in Harijan bastis and distribution of dresses to Harijan children and blankets to adults—these are some of the acts of philanthropy, really duties, undertaken by the Great Harijan organisation brought into being by Gandhiji.

Again, there are certain ancient disabilities to

which the Harijans are subject. For instance in the Garhwal districts the use of dolis and palkis is prohibited in Harijan marriage processions. This right for them has been asserted in the High Court of Allahabad. In Central India the sweepers are not permitted by bus drivers to travel in buses, and this right had been secured by the sweepers of Shajapur. How has all this been brought about—not by stray examples of social reformers, not by the exhortations of economists, not by the preachings of founders of religions, but by the dynamic energy released in a whole nation by the epic fast of a leader who held his life as naught and resolved to fast unto death to prevent the dismemberment of four crores of Harijans from the twenty-two crores of their Hindu brethren.

### *The Epic Fast*

When the political characters that fill the stage to-day will have played their part and disappeared, when the politics of to-day will have settled down into the history of to-morrow, when the very thought of a fifth of India's population being regarded as a submerged class will have become a forgotten tradition of the past, Mahatmaji's fast on the 20th September, 1932 shall live in the memory of posterity for centuries onwards as an epic event that changed the whole face of Indian struggle for national self-emancipation. That fast was directed against the political exploitation of a social evil, by creating a perpetual bar sinister between a so-called minority and a so-called majority by putting asunder those whom God hath really united in one vast Hindu community. The separation of the Harijans as a political group was doubtless the next logical step in

the process of the application of the doctrine of 'divide et impera' which has separated first the Mussalmans from the Hindus, then the Sikhs and then the Harijans. This act of political trickery moved the whole being of Gandhi who would not allow the untouchables to be classified as a separate class. 'For' said he, 'Sikhs may remain as such in perpetuity, so may Muslims remain in perpetuity. I would fear rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived.' Elsewhere in that famous speech in the Second Round Table Conference, he said, 'I will not sell the vital interest of the untouchables even for the sake of winning the freedom of India.'

Gandhi's fast was undertaken with a full faith in the cause, in the Hindu community and in human nature itself, and faith even in the official world. A fast so pure in origin, so comprehensive in purpose, so exalted in motive was bound to be convincing, converting and conquering all round. How else should we account for the magnificent reports of the Harijan Seva Sangh for the past four years!

Everywhere we hear of Harijan conferences, religious education amongst Harijans and Harijan Bhajan Parties in Mandirs, Vedic rites at Harijan ceremonies, civic surveys of Harijan centres and vocational and industrial institutes for Harijans. The country is charged with a new atmosphere altogether, a new interest in the welfare of the Harijan community. The most remarkable inspiration for this wide and vast Harijan uplift was derived from the handing over by Mahatmaji of his Sabarmati Ashram to the Harijan cause. That was the only institution which he could call his or which people could call his, but with its disestablishment, aptly could it be said of Gandhi that 'the birds of the

air have their nests, the beasts of the fields have their lairs, but the son of Man truly hath not a place where to lay his head.'

### *Right a National Wrong*

Our duty, therefore, does not end with touching the Harijans. We must go one step further and take them to the fold of our families and take steps to ameliorate their economic position. Treat them as fellow-men or fellow-women and press into service this great national cause, and India's freedom will be attained much earlier than otherwise. Even their admission into temples, a great reform in itself indeed, achieved by the Maharaja of Travancore and the Prince of Lathi may not compensate for neglect in the economic field. The Harijan problem is a composite one of self-purification as well as social helpfulness. It is a multifaceted one in that the issues involved are as much economic as social, as much ethical as religious. Let us, therefore, right this national wrong and raise our brethren along with ourselves to a higher stage of civic progress and political liberty. 'Removal of untouchability is a matter of change of heart,' says Gandhi, 'Hearts are not changed by expenditure of money, however wise it may be. The change will come when we have enough selfless, spiritually-minded, workers.'

### *Harijan Movement*

It is necessary that the public should understand the real character of the Harijan Movement. It has no political purpose behind it and in no sense is the anti-untouchability movement, is a political move-

ment. Nor is it intended purely for the economic amelioration of the Harijans nor yet for their social regeneration. Not that we do not aim at the social, and economic betterment of these millions, but that our goal is quite different from it. "Untouchability," says Mahatmaji, "is a blot upon Hinduism and must be removed at any cost. It is also a sin against God. It is a poison which, if not got rid of in time, will destroy Hinduism itself." The Savarna Hindus tell us that they will remove untouchability when the Harijans give up their habits of drinking, eating carrion, uncleanness and so on. We have to embrace them in spite of their shortcomings. The purification must be done first of the hearts of the Savarnas, not the bodies of the Harijans. "You have to get rid of untouchability or perish" are the words uttered by Gandhi in his great agony.

### *Temple Entry*

The Harijan movement has its moral as well as economic side. The opening of temples to the Harijans has always been considered as a duty laid upon the Hindus, if they recognise the supreme duty resting upon them of removing the taint from Hinduism itself. It was, therefore, almost a miracle and a marvel that the Meenakshi Temple, the biggest of the Southern Indian temples, should have been thrown open to the Harijans on the 8th of July, 1939. The Proclamation opening the State temples of Travancore was no doubt a very big step but it was the act of one Maharaja who had supreme powers in that behalf, and who was assisted by his wise Dewan. There the credit went to the Maharaja, the Maharani and the Dewan; but here it is

the work of the populace. It was the growth and pressure of public opinion that made it possible for the trustees to open the Madura temple to the Harijans. Speaking of the great *Mōaxizā* of Travancore we are bound to say that in the History of the removal of untouchability, the most remarkable event stands to the credit of the Travancore Durbar who issued the following proclamation in November, 1936.

Profoundly convinced of the truth and validity of our religion, believing that it is based on divine guidance and on all-comprehending toleration, knowing that in its practice it has, throughout the centuries, adapted itself to the need of the changing times, solicitous that none of our Hindu subjects should, by reason of birth, caste or community, be denied the consolation and solace of the Hindu faith, we have decided and hereby declare, ordain and command that,—subject to such rules and conditions as may be laid down and imposed by us for preserving their proper atmosphere and maintaining their rituals and observances, there should henceforth be no restriction placed on any Hindu by birth or religion on entering or worshipping at temples controlled by us and our Government.

Hinduism which is a work of art, tracing back its origin to thousand of years ago, has suffered numerous reverses, largely owing to the onslaught of foreign cultures, but also because customs and manners, rites and ceremonies, social laws and civic institutions that embodied a burning faith at one time, become external rites and ceremonies without that animation of faith and fervour which once gave life and energy to them. That is why Gandhi has said dealing with *Varna* and *Caste*, the cardinal basis of Hindu culture:

I have certainly meant what I have said that if Sastras support the existing untouchability, I should cease to call myself a Hindu. Similarly if they support caste as we know it

today in all its hideousness, I may not call myself or remain a Hindu since I have no scruples about inter-dining or inter-marriage.

*Sreemati Rameshwari Nehru's Services*

The craze for the conversion of the untouchables into other faiths is widely prevalent over the country. In Hyderabad (Deccan) the Muslim Divines are after them, in Kerala the Christian Missionaries. In her speech at Madhavanagar in the course of the Kerala Temple Entry Campaign, Sreemati Rameshwari Nehru dealing with the question of Mass conversion of Ezhavas, said:

I am amazed to find missionaries of every religion rushing into Travancore thinking that the Ezhavas can be converted to one religion or other. This is a very sad and humiliating spectacle. Why are all these missionaries coming into Travancore from various parts of India, as though the Ezhavas were simply so much prey for them to pounce upon? I have seen in the papers today a statement by certain missionaries of other religions from North India that if only the Ezhavas would join their respective religions, they would do everything for them and even give them the leadership of the respective communities concerned. Now this is a big promise, a promise that does not become religious-minded people. Who can fulfil such a religious-minded people? Who can fulfil such a promise? Such promises have not been fulfilled before and, I dare say, could not be in future, in the manner in which they are made. I understand there are caste distinctions and untouchability even among the Christians. In the Punjab where Harijans have been converted to one religion or another they still remain isolated. I cannot promise you anything so big if you remain loyal to Hinduism. I can only promise you our heart-felt repentance for the past and our tireless service in the future. If they will satisfy you, then all will be well. If these will not satisfy you, I have no other temptations

to offer, but whether Ezhavas and Harijans go away or stay with us, we shall continue the holy task of purifying Hinduism and Hindu society, of purging them of the evils of untouchability and of the distinctions of high and low.



## CHAPTER XVI

### COMMUNAL CONCORD

#### *Hindu-Muslim Unity*

To those who have a correct conception of the racial relationship between the different communities that inhabit this ancient land the question of Hindu-Muslim unity cannot but present itself less seriously than the view taken by the generality of the public. The problem is how many Muslims came out to India? How many are they now? The vast bulk of the Mussalman population of India are natives of this sacred land who professed its ancient faith and who through a concatenation of influences have changed their faith. The very fact that the Mussalmans were at one time the rulers of the country is enough to show that the conversion to the faith of the rulers is most natural and that indicates as much an appreciation of the principles of Islam as a desire to enjoy the prestige of identifying themselves with the religion of the rulers.

Accordingly, the problem is simpler than is some times fanatically visualised as being rooted in an ethical basis. It is true that streams of migrants came into India from adjoining Muslim countries. But even so the problem cannot be considered on the basis of the Muslims forming a separate nation any more than the Anglo-Indians can claim that they are a separate nationality because they are the off-spring of whilom

emigrants form Britain. Nationalism is a blend of religions and a harmonisation of interests. In what respect can Muslims be said to have separate interests apart from those of the rest of the population in India ? The economic interests of both the communities are identical. So the political ambitions of both the sections must be identical. Sometimes it is argued by enthusiastic Muslim friends that Muslims do not want a Democratic Government. What else do they want ? Bureaucratic form of Government under British auspices ? If that is so they will become the laughing-stock of the rest of the Muslim nations of the world. The Afghans despite their supposed backwardness do not endorse the Mussalmans of India falling foul of democracy. The Persians, proud of their independence, cannot be expected to sympathise with the supposed desire of the Muslims of India to remain a separate nation without a democratic form of government. The Egyptians, who have struggled for more than half a century for their independence simply cannot understand the Muslims of India not panting for like independence. The Wafdist Delegation which came to India at the time of the Tripuri Congress made this point sufficiently clear. The Turks who hold their head high in the comity of nations of the world have no shred of sympathy for this kind of atavism that the Muslims of India appear to long for. The Muslims of Basra, in Bushire, in Istambul, in Kandhar, in Khalat, Qustuntania, cannot view, let alone with enthusiasm,—with equanimity this reactionary spirit of the part of, as is alleged one-fifth of the population not wanting democratic self-government. The history of the leaders of these friends belies their professions. Mr. Jinnah who proclaims himself to be a disciple of

Gokhale and Surendranath Banerjee and was a nationalist among nationalists, was an avowed apostle of Swaraj till 1928. He suddenly changed colours after the publication of the Nehru report, and proclaimed himself an enemy of the constitution adumbrated therein. Ever since, he has been excelling himself in his newly begotten antipathy to the idea of Swaraj until at last he does not brook the idea of a sub-committee of the Congress appointed to negotiate with the Muslim League having on its personnel a single Muslim.

### *Muslims not a Separate Nation*

The suggestion that the Muslims are a separate nation even as the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine are and that a separate tract of our country should be set apart for the Muslim nation is perilously bordering upon the Pakistan idea. Is there not something weird—which may seem romantic at the first glance but which is doubtless wild in character—in this suggestion which is seriously made for the first time in the history of India? There was we remember something allied to it in the Presidential address of Maulana Mohammad Ali at the Cocanada session of the Congress in 1923, but it was neither seriously meant nor sedulously pursued by him at the Congress session or later. Nor did he make any reference to it at the first Round Table Conference which he attended in his stretcher. Apparently Mr. Jinnah has inherited an unknown political legacy from this national leader whose leadership, however, he had never acknowledged while the Maulana was alive.

It is in human nature that when some people go

to one extreme the other people however little the differences between them may be, jump to the other extreme so that if a crow is described as white by one side, the other side describes it as jet black. We must, therefore, clear our minds of such a psychology and warn ourselves against adopting a strategy or tactics which may defeat itself. The Hindus must, accordingly, take extra care not to run into the snare that is unwittingly spread for them. The spirit of vengeance not yet softened by the cult of Satyagraha is still rampant in the minds of most of us. We always direct attention not so much to the remote as to the immediate, not so much to principles as to policies, not to eternal justice but to immediate revenge. We shall be, by pursuing it, walking with our own steps into the graveyard that is to receive us. Let us not, therefore, be entrapped by adopting any extreme steps or threaten to fight the Muslims with sword, for that way lies the destruction of both and reinstallation of the third party whom we have been combating and whom we have nearly overpowered not by our arms and ammunitions, not by our aeroplanes and dreadnoughts, but by our simple organisation and effective suffering.

तेशतंहि वयं पंच

परस्पर विवादने

परस्तु विग्रहे प्राप्ते

वयं पंचाधिकं शतं

*Hindu and Muslim masses have no conflicts*

In its last analysis the problem is simple. The masses among the Muslims are not the victims of these animosities. They live in cordial relation with their Hindu brethren. The socio-economic life that is met with in the villages suggests that this distinction is

virtually unknown there. It is the creation of the urban life in the country, and the so-called educated classes. But even so it cannot be ignored or neglected. National awakening is always pursued from below. Even in Congress circles the awakening of the educated classes, their aspirations, their yearning for Swaraj have all been discounted by the English critics as being selfish manoeuvres of self-seeking middle classes: Selfishness is there, was there and will be there. At one time it forms the core, at another the cover. Finally it disappears. Now the great awakening that permeated the masses does not brook sordid selfishness on the part of their self-appointed leaders. Awakening in the Muslim masses must come in a like fashion. After all what are the difficulties in the provinces? North-West Frontier Province and the Sindh Province are the only provinces where the Muslims are in an overwhelming majority, and Hindus in a minority. There the problem of minorities affects the Hindus and not the Muslims. In Bengal and the Punjab, the Muslims are in a bare majority of say over fifty per cent. In Bengal, the problem is greatly complicated by the European entity which has been given a key position and acts as a makeweight in the balancing of interests between the two communities. The solution of the problem lies in setting right this upsetting factor than elsewhere. In the Punjab the Hindus have been virtually converted into a minority in the face of Muslim majority, the Sikh aspirations, its Christians, Zamindars, commercial groups and Harijans. It is true that Harijans are a part of the Hindus. Even so the Sikhs must be regarded as part of Hindus. The separatist tendencies must be neutralised betimes. In the provinces of C. P., Bombay and Madras, the problem is

practically non-existent. Not that it should be ignored but that it has been solved in a manner not open to objection. Muslims in these provinces range between five to seven per cent. They have a minister from their community. It is not a question of numbers. It is wholly a question of loyalty to the national organisation. Ultimately the problem is one that is confined to United Provinces and Bihar where the percentage of Muslims ranges from 12 to 15, where the Muslims in their awakening, their education, their longings, their aspirations, their pride and prejudice may be exactly likened to the Brahmins of South India, small in numbers but influential to a degree. If the United Provinces and Bihar can solve the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims there remains no problem that can be called the Muslim problem in India.

*Nature showers its bounties evenly*

Religion is a personal matter to each of us and is observed with the most meticulous loyalty to the doctrines underlying each faith. Yet in matters social, in matters economic there is a sense of harmony, yea, there is a sense of identity of interests and people recognise that a flood would be equally devastating to the lands of either community and a storm would be equally ruinous to all the members of the village irrespective of caste, creed or colour. Nature makes no distinction in conferring its bounties upon the people that inhabit the globe or visiting the nations of the world with the disasters and the cataclysms which are interspersed with its gifts of beneficence all along. Why should man create these artificial barriers between

the one citizen and another and say that India is a house divided against itself?

*Divide and Rule*

After nearly two centuries of British rule in India the one dominant factor with which the people are impressed is that they are a nation divided against itself. Oftentimes public attention has been rivetted on the divisions brought about in this ancient country by artificial standards set up under the foreign government. A third of India in area and a fourth of it in population has been set apart as the Indian States, which it is widely advertised are independent units, territories bound to the Crown of England by ties of friendship and alliances secured by treaties, sanads and engagements. In reality the Princes are merely puppets who hold their territories at the pleasure of the Crown of Britain.

On the other side, the country is divided into 11 provinces and attempts have been made very sedulously to regulate franchise and organise elections in a manner that the popular voice might not tell yet. Vox Dei has become really Vox Populi and once the Britisher has shot wide of the mark in the calculations that he has made. After dividing the country thus territorially, India has been further divided into communities, the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Harijans each with its own electorate virtually and each being pitted against the other, even in elections by force of cumulative vote and each being encouraged to make its own demands in the composition of Ministries as against another. Then the country has been divided in interests as between the urban and the rural popula-

tion and it is now widely known how the urban interests are patronised by the British Government in India better than the rural interests, how the standards of taxation governing the urban population are much less rigid and much less exacting than those governing the rural interests. Finally, the country has been cut up obliquely into various pieces called the Plains and the Agency areas. In the latter the ordinary rules and regulations of civil liberty and civil justice do not obtain and summary procedure is adopted. People are subjected to a certain measure of despotism which perhaps, is much more attenuated in the plains than in the Agencies. Besides these there is the group of planters, the group of European Commercial interests, the University, and the women of different communities as separate factors in elections. All these differences, therefore, help to constitute India into a kind of pigeon-hole, where each compartment is labelled, ticketed and docketed and the 35 crores of people are classified and placed into compartments—water-tight, air-tight, idea-tight and vote-tight compartments—and are encouraged to feel that they are different from one another in thought, sentiment and ambition.

This is the genesis and the *modus operandi* relating to the division of the country into various groups and then we are told that this country cannot be a nation because the people talk 250 languages and profess different religions and present a thousand sects and subsects. We have accepted this statement piously made and sedulously propagated by the rulers and we have remained not only silent but felt helpless under this sense of internal division. Indeed these divisions did not play a part in the political life of the country so long as the elected element in the Legislatures was



of a negligible character

It was in 1893 that for the first time the elected element was introduced into the Indian Legislative Councils, Provincial and Central, and till then the Councils were only composed of the nominated element both officials and non-officials. When, however, the small elected element of 1893 (seven in Madras) was sought to be expanded to 28, in 1908, the communal consciousness was roused. In fact, it was one of the operating causes which had led to the division of Bengal earlier in 1905 into two provinces and the Muslim consciousness was for the first time roused by the partition. Till then the Hindus were patronised by the British but when they saw that the national spirit began to permeate the millions of Hindus in India, it was considered safe to put a spoke in the wheel of progress and a Muslim Province was created in East Bengal. This wrong of Partition was ultimately repaired in 1911 (Dec.) at the Delhi Durbar by H. M. The King but the mischief continued to remain operative in the minds of the communities. The bitterness once engendered began to feed itself upon the anger and spirit of vengeance within, and beginning from 1908 we have the sad spectacle of the Hindu-Muslim differences tainting the picture of development of Indian polity.

People, however, woke up betimes and in 1916 took steps to repair the great wrong. But instead of joint electorates the sense of separateness once established had to be implemented in the Hindu-Muslim Concordat of Lucknow of 1916 and ever since that time, separateness has formed the basis of all talks. But when the Khilafat movement arose in the year 1921 all differences were forgotten for the time being,

although with the abolition of the Khilafat and the abandonment of the claims of the Khalifa by Turkey herself, the home of the Khalifs, this sense of unity suddenly disappeared giving rise to a violence culminating in the discharge of the pent-up feelings which had been kept down under the weight of an overpowering sentiment. From 1924 right down to last year it was a sad story of Hindu-Muslim differences now rising to the level of a pitched battle, now assuming the shape of subdued spirit of rivalry. But people were easily able to see that all these rivalries, conflicts and warfares, were the creation of the English educated classes who were fighting for their own advancement individually and not for the national advancement of the communities as a whole. The Congress was easily able to recognise the truth of this aspect of the matter even so early as 1931. Soon after the return of Mahatma Gandhi from the second Round Table Conference the very first statement that he made to his colleagues of the Working Committee was that any further negotiations or developments relating to Indian polity should be based on Hindu-Muslim unity and that while he had been prepared for various differences at the Round Table Conference, he was not prepared to see the sad developments that he had witnessed in London as between the Hindus and the Muslims on the one side and as between the Moderates and the Congressmen on the other.

The 'visualisation of a thing,' he said, is quite different from the 'actualisation thereof,' and the actualisation of the bitterness, the rancour and the impossible spirit displayed at the second Round Table Conference opened the eyes of the nation to the supreme fact that there are people in this country who would subordinate

the immediate to the remote, the principle to expediency and the national to the communal.

Go where you like to the villages in India, whatever social or religious differences you may find between the devotees of one faith and another, the identity of economic interest and the sense of fellowship that prevails amongst such diametrically opposite communities as the Muslims and the Hindus or the Savarnas and the Avarnas amongst the Hindus themselves or the higher or lower castes amongst the Savarnas is a spectacle which is bound to take by surprise those who have been fed upon the pabulum provided by the European tourists in India of this ancient country being a continent with rival religions, conflicting interests and warring faiths. In the villages the Muslim and the Hindu hob-nob with each other, little noticing that the faith of the one is different from the faith of the other and less aware of and least minding the artificial feuds nurtured in the top strata of society.

People say the leftists are free from communal differences while the rightists are not. It is a half truth. The fact is that self-wardness develops with opportunities. If there is a tree with fruits, surrounded by a ring of persons, those nearest the tree would be tempted while those remotest would be free from all *Lalach* or greed.

Let us look at nature. The river is purest at its fountain, becomes charged with salts and alluvium in its course and it is only at the *Sagara Sangam* and within 30 miles of it that the waters get even saltish. This is the philosophy and rationale of rightists presenting such narrow spirit and this tends to become narrower and narrower as the actualities of life come to be confronted more and more proximately. That is why

at first we feel we are Hindus and Muslims, next we are Brahmans and non-Brahmans. Later we are, amongst the latter, Reddis, Velama, Kammas and Kapus and so on. And then finally amongst each of these we are 'clannish' according to house names. The lower down we go, the narrower is the range of affections. Unless we survive these narrow affiliations, we can have no nationalism and we must in this matter learn a lesson from England where Catholic and Protestant, where Christian and Jew—all alike work together for the Nation. At the left we do not get down to brass tags. At the right we tend to become selfward. Let us keep to the *centre* and make a successful journey.

Look at the length to which Gandhi is prepared to go to avoid conflict with the Muslims. Rebutting the charge of the use of force against Muslims, Gandhi says (vide *Harijan*, VIII, p. 49) "If I can carry the Congress with me I would not put the Muslims to the trouble of using force. I would be ruled by them for it would still be Indian rule. In other words, the Congress will have only a non-violent approach to every question and difficulty arising." But the British approach was different. The communal decision of the British premier is but a palliative—rather an irritant employed to treat the symptom of a disease which, however, cannot be treated apart from the disease itself. You cannot accept the decision because you are unwilling to do so. You cannot reject it because you are powerless to do so.

We have all along suffered by our own internal divisions. Why did Indian Kings not combine when Prithvi Raj of Ajmere—the Westernmost Hindu Power—was menaced by the Turkish Hordes of *Mohammad*

*Ghori*? In 1526 the Pathan and Rajput rulers of Northern India sent an invitation to Babar at Kabul to invade India and turn out the unpopular *Ibrahim Lodi* from the throne of Delhi. In 1756 the Muslim and Hindu Nobles of Bengal conspired to invite the English in Calcutta to attack Siraj-ud-Doula. Shall we now invite the Russians through our Communist brethren? No one in India in his senses would change horses in the midstream. We must get Britain to acknowledge India's Independence and the Muslims, and the Hindus will join hands forthwith. If Britain says to us as Rome said to Britain "we can no longer defend you, we are going away, look to your own defence" just as the Emperor Honorius said to the peace-loving Romanized Christian Britons in 410 A. D. when Rome was menaced by Alaric the Goth, what shall we do? In unity lies our strength and salvation.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ETHICAL UPLIFT: PROHIBITION

#### THE SIN MONEY

##### *Drink*

Amongst the sources of revenue of the Government of India and of the Provinces, 17 crores accrues to the Provinces from Drink while the Central Government derives 6 crores from Salt and one crore from Opium. These make up 24 crores and amongst the Eleven Points pleaded for by Gandhi on the eve of the Salt Satyagraha, one was the abolition of Sin Money arising from Drink, Opium and Salt. And to balance this loss, he had advocated the reduction of the military expenditure of 48 crores to a half thereby saving in expenditure 24 crores—the same that was lost in revenue. We may give a passing thought to each of these subjects which figure prominently in the constructive programme of Gandhism.

Drink is one of the seven Devils of the world. Crores of the poorer folks as well as thousands of the rich have become victims to this dire evil and are ruining their health, wealth, and happiness in life. Drink is not objectionable in the eyes of the civilised West, though drunkenness is taken exception to. But in our country no one condones drink, it does not matter to what class of society he may belong. Even the

classes given to drink by ancient custom, dare not declare their weakness that way consistently with their respectability. But as a result of contact with the West, certain new classes of people, notably a few amongst the richer sections of society have become accustomed to drink in general and to the use of foreign drinks in particular. Not that there was no drink in our country in ancient days,—indeed instances do occur in the epics of people taking intoxicants and this is evident from the verse in Bhagavadgeeta according to which Sukracharya prohibited the use of all drinks. He declared that ‘those who are given to drink are sinners.’

The population of this country is 35 crores; of them the Hindus are 24 crores, while the Muslims are 8 crores in number. Amongst the Hindus there are about 4 crores of so-called ‘Untouchables’ and 80 to 90 per cent of the male population of the unfortunate class are pining away under the devastating influence of drink. Besides this, there are certain classes of people who are labourers or roving mendicants who spend the bulk of their earnings upon drink. And it is much to be regretted that even amongst the higher classes of agriculturists, there are certain sections which under the influence of drink have lost their reputation, position in society, character and personal and family happiness. After the advent of the British into this country this indulgence in liquor has become an open vice and trade therein has been publicly licensed under the authority of the state. Yea, for a long time drink has actually become one of the chief sources of revenue to Government. To license a declared sin like drink which is on a par with crimes such as theft and gambling, under the sign manual as it were of the authorities

is a matter for shame and sorrow. It is not less heinous on the part of the state to grant a licence to carry on trade in liquor which is subversive of society, than to highway robbery or secret brothels. But the unfortunate position is that in the eye of our rulers, neither drink nor gambling is to be looked down upon in the same manner and to the same extent as they are in our own country according to its ancient tradition.

In Muslim society equally with Hindu, the founders of religion and the priests have preached in an unequivocal manner against this evil of Drink. It is regrettable that in Muslim society also drink has penetrated far and wide, as in Hindu society. And to uproot this mighty evil those who are for the well being of society, have it as a duty laid upon them to labour strenuously and incessantly not only by invoking the moral law of religion but also by pressing into service the commands of the Congress.

### *17 Crores Revenue*

Fancy ! a Government, making, over the whole of British India, a sum of Rs. 17 crores by way of revenue derived from this obnoxious evil. Out of the revenues of the Madras Government aggregating to 16 crores, a fourth is derived from Abkari. Is it not an irony of fate and nay a tragedy that while the poor are starving under the influence of drink to which their men are addicted, the rich should be making merry over the education that they are receiving with the aid of this very revenue derived from the blood of the poor? Is it not an instance of robbing Peter to pay Paul or killing crows to feed eagles? It is worse, for



it is as if a father is told that if he wants treatment for his first son and education for his second, his third and fourth sons must drink in order that the 4 crores of drink revenue may provide 2 crores for colleges and 2 crores for hospitals.

Whole families skilled in the arts and crafts of life have under the influence of drink become deprived of their cunning and capacity. The dexterity of those given to drink declines under its growing influence, and their very blood degenerated, allowing a whole category of diseases to thrive on them. It is well known how those who are given to drink are wanting in the capacity of resistance to disease and fall an easy prey to their destructive effects. Drink destroys the power of judgment and makes its victims yield to the temptations that draw them into crimes of various sorts.

By controlling drink the poverty of the labouring classes can straightway be reduced, by a half. Their health and culture would progress to double the measure. Crime in the country would decline a good deal leading to a corresponding decline in the expenditure of the State in having to detect or prevent it. Money is saved and this in turn fosters trade; promotes production and develops the creative energy in the nation.

For the past 17 years under the auspices of the Congress, Gandhi has been propagating this cult of abstinence and the Congress Ministries which have come into power have undertaken to implement in several provinces the programme which they have placed before the public for the past decade and a half. A sudden stoppage of drink all over a Presidency at the same time would cut off the income of the Province materially and embarrass the finances of Government. Accordingly the Congress Ministries have inaugurated

this reform as a first step in the district of Salem, Chittoor, Cudapa and North Arcot in the Madras presidency, in the cities of Bombay and Ahmedabad, in the Western province and in select areas in other provinces. Let it be remembered that these are only a first step and not an experiment by any means, and the subsequent steps should have been adopted in the course of the succeeding years. For it is necessary to balance the budget and this can be done only by reducing all possible avoidable expenditure elsewhere and increasing all possible additional sources of revenue,—processes which require careful examination of the affairs of the State and well-considered innovations in them.

### *Gandhi on Prohibition*

Here we may appropriately incorporate the observations of Gandhi on the introduction of Prohibition in Bombay. He writes under date 26-3-39, New Delhi:—

'Handsome is that handsome does' is a neat proverb. I have often said that it is wrong to call Bombay beautiful only because of the fine approach to the harbour or for its many beauty spots so long as it contains dirty cbawls, overcrowded lanes and uninhabitable hovels which serve as dwelling places for its Harijans. But when Bombay goes dry, as it will very soon, it will become truly beautiful even for this one singularly beautiful act and it will deserve the title in spite of the blemishes I have mentioned. For when its labouring population has the temptation of drink removed from them, with the improvement in their condition which always follows the exorcism of the drink evil, it must become easier for the Bombay Municipality to deal with the problem of providing better habitations for the poor classes. The Bombay Government, and especially Dr. Gilder, deserve the thanks of the citizens of Bombay,

may of the whole Province, for the courage with which they have approached their task. I know that many Parsis who depend upon drink traffic for their living will be affected. Bombay is the stronghold of the Parsis. Then there are its fashionable citizens who think they need their spirituous drinks as they need water. I have every hope that they will all rise to the occasion, think of their poor brethren, even if they do not appreciate abstinence for themselves, and set an example to all India and make good the claim of Bombay not only to be beautiful but also the first city in India.

Prohibition in Bombay will mean a big fall in revenue. The Finance Minister has to balance his budget. He has to find money. He has to levy new taxes. Let there be no complaint from those who will have to bear the burden. Dislike of taxes, be they ever so reasonable, is proverbial. I understand that the Finance Minister has met all just objections. Why should those who will have to bear the burden not feel a pride in being given the privilege of contributing to the great experiment? It will be a proud day for Bombay if prohibition is ushered in amid the rejoicing of the whole population. Let it be remembered that this prohibition is not a superimposition. It is being introduced by Governments that are responsible to the people. It has been a plank in the national programme since 1920. It is coming, therefore, in due fulfilment of the national will, definitely expressed nearly twenty years ago.

### *Causes analysed*

It would be interesting to study in this connection a few statistics relating to the causes of drink amongst the poorer classes. Some statistics have been prepared from amongst the patients in a hospital in New York. These reveal the fact that they have taken to drink for various reasons. For social reasons 52.5 per cent have taken to drink, 13 per cent on account of domestic troubles, for medical reasons 9.3 per cent, profes-

sional 7 per cent, being taught by elders 7 per cent, on account of unemployment 5 per cent, for sporting reasons 1.2 per cent and 5 per cent of the people have not been able to account for the habits that they have contracted.

Take again the social repercussions of drink. Divorces are largely traced to domestic quarrels, arising from drink. Between the years 1887-1906, it is said that in America 1,84,568 marriages ended in divorces and 45 per cent of these were occasioned by reason of drink. In cities we often hear of brothels and 80 per cent of the women that gather in these brothels do so under the influence of drink. In our own country in the N. W. F. P. the average expenditure on drink per capita, we are told, is 3 annas 8 pies, in Bombay Rs. 2-1-0 while in the other Provinces the amounts range between these two figures.

### *Reactions of Drink*

Or take again the reaction of drink upon the capacity for work. As the result of liquor, the marksman suffers in shooting by the shaking of his hands, the compositor in the printing press finds his fingers unsteady and the sportsman on the athletic field notes that his limbs become nearly frail. People work the whole week and take a holiday on Sunday and drink a good deal on that day. On Monday they are unfit for work. By the way, as medical students we often used to find our doctors in the General Hospital very unsafe on Mondays. Reverting to capacity for work, we note that the man who can hit the target correctly 80 times out of hundred on a Saturday, can only do 70 per cent on a Monday. A man who can compose

8 sticks on a Saturday, can only do 6 sticks on a Monday. A man who can clear 10 ft. in long jump on a Saturday is able to clear only 8 or 9 ft. on a Monday. The wonder is that from Monday to Tuesday and from Tuesday to Wednesday and Thursday, the capacity of all these workers goes on increasing step by step until by Thursday evening they are able to recover their normal attainments and efficiency. On Friday they are perfect and so are they on Saturday. But on Sunday comes drink and from Monday begins the decline.

Thus goes on the cycle of ruin rapidly until at last the machine breaks down beyond the limits of recovery. It is easy to prevent the case against drink in a variety of ways. Judged morally, it is a sin against God. Judged socially, it is a blot on civilization. Judged physically, it is a hindrance to the performance of our daily duties. The wonder is that this civilized Government should have been sedulously fostering this source of revenue for so long.

When drink is given up not only will the people save the 4 crores paid to Government in Madras presidency but they would be saving 17 crores of money which represents the value of drink itself in the Southern Province. And when all the 28 districts of this Presidency keep pace with Salem, the savings of the people will rise by 21 crores a year and help to replenish the revenues of the State in various ways while the expenditure of the State itself would go down materially. People who have thus grown richer would support the State and society by the increase of their purchasing power and a new era of prosperity and all-round happiness will begin in, if only Congressmen assist in this noble work and devote them-

selves heart and soul to the task of regeneration lying before them, a task which is twice blessed and even thrice.

## APPENDIX

*Being an Article contributed to the Press*

BY

GOPINATH BARDOLAI

*Ex-premier, Assam*

### I

The exalted Moghul Emperor of Delhi is said to have sent with his other presents a *block of opium* to His Swargadeo, the Ahom Raja of Assam. The Ambassador accompanying them fully explained to His Highness and his courtiers the method of its use, and its many tonic properties. For more than a hundred years, the Moghul Emperors of Delhi, tried to invade and conquer Assam but on seventeen occasions they were driven out from the borders of Assam. It seems, however, that this block of opium made greater conquest of the brave and the sturdy Ahom than all the hordes of the Great Moghul army. Although the Moghuls were already out of the picture to reap any benefit, the habit of smoking opium gradually percolated to the lower strata of Assamese society. By the time the British took possession of Assam in 1826, in the usual plea of rendering aid to the distressed population (after the Burmese invasion), a whole nation came under the jaws of this monster.

The Britisher, with his unfailing commercial ins-

tinct, immediately converted this human failing into a source of great gain. Poppy cultivation prevailing in the province was stopped, and opium imported from Behar began to be circulated through the Government treasuries. The opium eaters, and with them a section of Assamese public showed great resentment against this new order, and riots broke out in many places. But they were easily quelled, and the temptation of addicts prevailed over their idea of economy. And a disastrous chapter in the history of Assam began. As the price of opium was then comparatively cheaper (varying from Rs. 20/- to Rs. 30/- in the seer) and no restriction of any kind was imposed in the matter of consumption, opium became the panacea for all diseases to the ignorant. And this belief did not fail to be emphasized by our rulers. It is well known that in the evidence led by India before the Opium Commission, it was sought to be made out that opium besides being a cure for many ailments, was a general tonic and was also a preventive against Malaria, Kalaazar and many other diseases.

The number of addicts naturally began to increase every day till by 1910-1915, more than 10 per cent of the entire population became addicted to the evil of opium. While the average income of the people in terms of rupees could not be more than Rs. 30/- to Rs. 36/- in the year per head, these unfortunate addicts spent not less than Rs. 20 in the year on opium alone. The result of this continuous drain on their resources was easily seen. Whole families, sometimes villages were reduced to conditions of abject poverty. They became nothing else but a herd of most selfish and shameless animals. Not to speak of other properties, an addict would easily sacrifice his wife's and children's



clothing to the extent of keeping them naked in order to have his ration. He would not consider it a shame to send out his wife and grown up daughters to beg, sometimes at the cost of their chastity in order that the family might live, while he idled and smoked opium. He would not hesitate to have his growing sons engaged even as slaves in order that he may have small odd coins to satisfy his craving. The neighbours of the addicts always felt unsafe; for verily would they find themselves deprived, of small pieces of utensils, of vegetables and fruits from their gardens; for a destitute opium eater has always been found to be a pilferer and a cheat. Physically opium not only devitalizes a man but makes him the most slothful of all living creatures. He develops a sort of hydrophobia, becomes averse to all wash and cleanliness, and with prolonged use gets the colour of opium over his skin. It is worth nothing that the poorer and more backward is a community in the social structure of Assam, more gravely and more extensively is it afflicted with this evil. Thus aborigines, the tribals, and somehow the Ahoms also have been the worst consumers of opium.

Thus while a large proportion of our population underwent a process of physical, moral and economic degradation, the coffers of the British Government began to swell. During the first and second decade of this century the total Revenue of the Government of Assam was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  crores or little less; of this, land revenue which was also obtained from the ordinary ryots represented about a crore, and nearly 50 lacs or more represented income from Excise; and of the Excise revenue nearly 70 to 75 per cent represented income from opium. So that while the big European

planters paid land revenue at the rate of Rs. 1-2-0 per acre and the rich Zamindars at the rate of 5 annas in the acre, the poor Assamese villagers paid at the rate of Rs. 2-8-0 in the acre in the average.

It cannot be said that enlightened public opinion was indifferent to the ruinous excise policy of Government or to the deplorable condition of the addicts. The feeling of the vast unsympathetic numbers was one of contempt towards them—a 'Kania' or 'Opium Eater' itself connoting a contemptuous meaning. But within recent history many public men did their best to fight this great evil. As early as the days of 'Sepoy Mutiny' Moniram Dewan who was implicated as a plotter to overthrow the British domination in Assam and was hanged, had moved the British Government, and educated the people, for the total abolition of opium. As pointed out elsewhere people in general always stand against it. Specious arguments about the efficacy of opium as a panacea in tropics were invariably sung by the European bureaucrats, their subordinate Indian Officers, and a set of so called public men then known in the country as 'Jo Hucums'. In 1916, the late Sjt. Phonidhor Chaliha, a retired extra Assistant Commissioner and a member of the Assam Council strongly criticized the opium policy of Government in Council and said that Government had no justification in maintaining a revenue (opium revenue) which was based on the moral and physical degradation of so many people. The reply of the Chief Commissioner, Sir Nicholas Dodds Beatsonbell (subsequently a missionary) was that if Hon'ble Mr. Chaliha felt that the revenue was so tainted, he should surrender his pension, on which he was living. The whole country, as it were, felt this insult and the younger

generation was only contemplating in what way to meet this insult and challenge.

The opportunity soon came. Mahatmaji's clarion call of self and social purification as means of political emancipation received the widest response from the Assamese people, so much so that a Despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State towards the end of 1922 had to admit that here alone (districts of Assam Valley) the agitation (Non-co-operation movement assumed the character of a mass movement. The leaders (both late) Sjt. Nobin Chandra Bardoloi and Sjt. Tarun Ram Phookan made prohibition—particularly the prohibition of opium, a definite issue in the programme. Excise shops were widely picketed and the first batch of arrests in May 1921 at Jagi in Nowgong district were of pickets at the opium shop. In many places a house to house propaganda was carried on and huge bonfires were made of smoking implements, which the addicts surrendered to our volunteers. The name of the Mahatma was something to conjure with, and the public opinion became so strong in the villages that the addict felt it necessary to yield to it. The effect of this movement became much too obvious, and bureaucracy was not a bit too late in realizing it. The excise revenue was reduced to nearly a half, and the quantity of opium sold fell down from over 2100 mds. to less than 1200 maunds. The bureaucracy felt alarmed; and on the fantastic plea that the volunteers' organization of Assam was out to take possession of treasuries and Offices of Government declared the organization illegal. Between November 1921, and February 1922, as many as a thousand Volunteers and leaders were put in prison for terms varying from 3 months to 18 months. With the subsidence

of the movement, however, the monster which was scotched but not killed, raised its head again; and although the venom became less powerful, it remained there nevertheless. Some of the old addicts took to the habit again and the quantity of opium sold began to increase gradually.

Congressmen, however, would not allow the matter to rest here; and Dinabandhu Andrews came to their rescue. He advised them to institute a Committee to enquire into the whole question of opium addiction in Assam and the policy of Government in relation to it. A Committee was accordingly set up with Sjt. K. D. Chaliha, (worthy son of the late Sjt. Phonidhor Chaliha) now M. L. A. (Central) as Chairman and the late Sjt. Robini Kanta H. Barua as the Secretary. The Committee toured the whole of Assam,—collected evidence, and prepared an excellent report which was largely made use of by the Dinabandhu in presenting before the League of Nations the evil arising from the Opium Policy of the Government of India, with particular reference to Assam.

Agitation of a constitutional character was also started inside and outside the council chamber, till the then Excise Minister, Rev. Nicholas Roy agreed to another enquiry predominantly composed of council members for the purpose of determining the best means to be adopted for eradicating the evil. Government took two years (1927 and 1928) to formulate their proposals, which may be summarised as follows: (1) That within ten years, all addicts below 50 years of age, should be freed from the habit (2) that during this time, rations of all opium eaters, who were to be registered and would receive opium under a pass, should be yearly diminished, with a view to complete elimi-

tion in 10 years. To the Government maintenance of revenue was not supposed to be any consideration for the adoption of this policy; but to the public at large that was taken to be the only consideration. Bureaucracy which yet reigned supreme was found overflowing with the milk of human kindness for the addicts—the older ones particularly. Occasionally, European District Officers would be caught in a spell of kindness and large numbers of new addicts would find themselves admitted in the register. But while the quantity consumed was gradually diminishing, the price of opium was progressively increasing. In the budget of 1938-39, which was also the ninth year of the operation of the scheme, the opium revenue was yet estimated at 10½ lacs, and there were nearly 31,000 opium eaters yet on the roll. It was at this stage that the Congress Coalition Ministry assumed charge of the administration of Assam.

## II

The opportunity for eradicating a great evil, for which the Congressmen of Assam had suffered so much came; and the Congress Coalition Ministry was not at all slow to avail of it. The evil of the ration system was too patent to them. No sane man could expect renunciation in indulgence. To expect that a man could be immune from a habit after 10 years of indulgence in however diminishing quantity it might be shown on papers, was only to expect that he would supplement this reduction by use of smuggled opium. And this is exactly what happened. Smuggling which continued to increase with reduction in rations, was converted into organization as big, if not bigger than

the Excise Department itself. A district Officer of a very important district went so far as to hint that very big people mostly non-provincial merchants, were involved in this illicit trade. Honest excise officials made no secret of the fact, that opium shops themselves, not only sold surplus opium acquired by short weight sales, but also largely distributed the smuggled stuff. To the general public the excise staff was another name for corruption, and even the higher officials were regarded only as Caesar's wife. In the Retrenchment Committee, most of the recommendations about this department were based on the above assumption.

The above are only a few evils that the Congress Coalition Ministry was called upon to contend against in formulating their scheme. The position of the finances of Assam was hardly affluent enough to permit us to indulge in any expensive venture. The last Government estimated a deficit of 2½ lacs, for the year 1938-39 and a devastating flood which affected both the Valleys of Assam was likely to add another 8 lacs to our deficit. The consideration of any reduction in opium revenue, therefore, involved imposition of fresh taxation—the avenue of which affecting at least the general population, was closed by bureaucracy. In the face of this, the question naturally arose, if we should take up a heavily affected district. In the party meeting we were unanimous that if the evil is to be fought, it must be in right earnest: it should be started in the heaviest consuming area and where smuggling had its regular home. It was also decided that in all other places accelerated reduction with a view to total prohibition in two years i.e., to say from 1941, should take place; but in these places also the Scheme would operate as soon as the workers would be released from

the former area from 1940. The areas chosen for the experiment were sub-divisions of Dibrugarh and Sib-sagar (nearly 2000 sq. miles) with an addict population of nearly 10,700 which represents more than  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of the total number of addicts. The revenue to be immediately surrendered for the year 1939-40 was 4 lacs for total prohibition for this area, and 2 lacs on account of accelerated reduction, for all other areas; besides this an expenditure of a lac and twenty-five thousand was estimated over the scheme. We had not also a ready legislation in hand to meet all the exigencies of the situation and had to base all our punitive actions on the existing Opium Act.

The venture of the Congress Coalition Government had, therefore, to be at once enterprising, bold and resourceful. The question of the inequity in the distribution of taxation was already an issue before the Congress party even before office was accepted. We thought that an Agricultural Income Tax affecting only the rich Zamindars and Tea planters could alone mitigate this inequality. The Finance Minister, Mr. F. A. Ahmad, who set his whole heart on this measure had also before him some other measures of taxation, such as sales taxes on petrol, lubricants and luxuries and amusement taxes etc., proposed and adopted by other Congress Governments which might increase the revenue. It was calculated that Agricultural Income Tax might alone bring in a revenue of 30 lacs and other taxes 5 lacs in all. It was, accordingly, decided that these taxation measures (which were subsequently carried in both the Houses, including a Joint Session over the A. I. Bill ensuring the return of this income) would meet the fall in revenue and expenditure on the Scheme and on the basis of this Revenue, Mr. F. A.

Ahmad expressed that Government could go to the open market for loan, if at all necessary.

The Scheme, the details and working of which will be described presently evoked unprecedented enthusiasm among all sections of the public. Hundreds of associations and bodies, congratulated the Ministry on the resolve and offered full co-operation for the success of the venture. But the opposition in the Assembly led by Sir Mohammad Saadullah condemned it in no uncertain terms, eulogised the old Scheme, and remarked that if this 6 lacs of rupees were spent on primary education, men would better learn to give up the evil. The European leader, Mr. Hockenhull was agreeable to allow the Scheme the chance of an experiment for a year. Before launching the Scheme I sought for blessings from Mahatma Gandhi, members of the Congress Working Committee, the Premiers of the Provinces, the provincial Governors—both officiating and permanent, the provincial leaders and the heads of all distinguished religious institutions in the province. They were all kind enough to send their blessings and congratulations. Mahatmaji was even pleased to suggest certain constructive action for the relief of the addicts, and till a later stage was pursuing his enquiries about which I satisfied him on the 30th April, 1939, in Calcutta.

Even the European leader was pleased to assure all help from the tea estates. But the Protestant Bishop of Assam refused to bless the venture saying the he did not believe in total prohibition. A highly placed English lady applauded my enthusiasm, but inquired of me, if I was not much too optimistic to expect any result out of the movement.

As regards the Scheme (which through the cour-



tesy of the Excise Minister, Sree Akhoy Kumar Das, was left to be formulated by my humble self) it was divided into 3 spheres of activity, viz., (a) propaganda, (b) vigilance and (c) medical treatment of the addicts. The propaganda, non-governmental vigilance, the survey of the addicts and their care during treatment, was left to two predominantly non-official sub-divisional Committees, who in their turn organised local Committees with local volunteers. These Volunteers carried on propaganda in the addicts' centres, brought them to the treatment sheds and acted as attendants during the period of treatment. Some of them also kept watch over the movements of the smugglers in the villages and reported all suspicious characters, and sometimes helped the excise staff in bringing them to book before the excise authorities. The entire non-official activity was placed in the hand of one of our most trusted Congress leaders, Sjt. Omco Kumar Das, M.L.A., who was known as the Honorary Prohibition Commissioner.

The vigilance activities, of course, remained entirely in the hands of the Excise Commissioner, Rai Bahadur Durgeswar Sarma, B.L., who was a trusted Government servant of considerable reputation, and was especially requisitioned for the work. He had indeed to exercise a lot of caution not only in the selection of his staff, but also in appointing the additional hands which were considerable. Partol parties, special guards and a new spying system had to be taken recourse to in coping with a big organization of the smugglers.

While the responsibility of the Excise Commissioner was great, the work of the medical treatment was surely more exacting. An initial survey of opium

eat-ers revealed that the total number of addicts as found by the two Sub-divisional Committees, was over 13,600 while the names on the roll were about 10,700 only. The task of arranging for treatment of this number in the village within a few months appeared baffling in the beginning. The medical and Public Health Departments were hesitating as to the best method of treatment to be adopted. Modino's treatment which involved the creation of a sore on the patient's body, would be naturally repulsive to the addicts, would require perfect hospital conditions for treatment, and would involve prohibitive costs. Col. Chopra, the Principal of the School of Tropical Medicines, was carrying on an experiment of Lecithin and Glucose treatment for opium addicts, and on reference, was only pleased to offer it for the Assam Campaign. He placed the services of one of his assistants Dr. Chopra, at the disposal of the Government of Assam for a short period and between him and Col. Allen, Principal, Berry White Medical School, Dibrugarh, came to the conclusion that this treatment was the best. For it was demonstrated that the craving of the addicts was more or less psychological, and that a nerve tonic was quite enough to set a man to his original normality. The entire work was put in charge of the Director of Public Health, Col. Hesterlow. A large number of doctors were appointed, the tea Estates also furnished some of them, and all the Local Board doctors were engaged. Many private doctors also volunteered service. All these doctors were put under short period of training. Eminent surgeons and physicians of the Province, like Dr. Harekrishna Das and Dr. Bhubaneswar Barua (member, Central Medical Council) travelled hundreds of miles inspecting the results in the nume-

rous village centres.

It seemed everybody did his best to make the campaign a success. The public, particularly the Marwari Community, made free gifts of rations, and blankets; the sub-divisional Committees with the Local Committees and Volunteers did such good work and rendered such harmonious co-operation that both the Director of Public Health, as well as the Excise Commissioner in their report made special note of this fact. Through the influence of Col. Allen co-operation received from some European-owned tea Estates was no less remarkable. The reports received from both the Excise Commissioners and the Director of Public Health upto the time of our resignation in November bore ample testimony to the unique success the movement achieved, while the estimate of success made by the Honorary Prohibition Commissioner was even more encouraging. The Excise Superintendent recorded in his very conservative report that about 70 per cent of addicts in the Dibrugarh sub-division was completely freed from the evil, while in the Sibsagar Sub-division the percentage was even greater. He said that detection in smuggling has amply increased which required the employment of an additional magistrate at Dibrugarh and that larger quantities of opium were seized from smugglers than in previous years. He, however, thought that as the sinews of smuggling spread throughout the whole Valley and even beyond the borders, the Scheme as contemplated by the Congress Coalition should be immediately extended to the whole of Assam Valley. Col. Hesterlow's report was as interesting as instructive. Over 10,300 addicts were treated of ages ranging from youths just above teens to old men of 70 to 80 years, and there was not a

single case of death on account of the treatment. 4 or 5 cases of death were reported, but it took place sometime after their release from treatment for other ailments. 70 to 80 p.c. of patients showed distinct apathy to re-addiction. The reaction on the system on account of abstinence continued for about a week, but the symptoms which generally consisted of diarrhoea, cramps, etc., became acute on the 3rd and the 4th day. Within ten days the patient begins to react very favourably and from that time begins to put on flesh—often-times changing the characteristic darkness on the skin.

The new ministry under the leadership of Sir Md. Saadullah that came to office after our resignation, repeated in their budget speech their criticism made in the Assembly as oppositionists. The European Group Leader now Mr. Moore threw uncalled for invectives against Congress and this movement. It was, therefore, taken for a certainty that they would abandon Congress policy. But we came to know that some of these Ministers were inquiring the cause of popularity of the Congress Coalition Ministry and even some officials attributed it to our undertaking a movement like the opium Prohibition. The present Government came to know also that Col. Chopra was intent on preparing a report on the working to satisfy enquiries about the experiment in Japan and America. After this, a belated communique was issued by Government in June last to the effect that they would maintain the policy of accelerated reduction of opium adopted by us, so that opium will not be lawfully available for ordinary men after March, 1941. Obviously they abandoned the policy of treatment and extra vigilance adopted by the Congress Coalition Government. In itself this modification does not appear to be very

great; but even this small modification does not appear to be very small as it explains the difference between the outlook of a true reformer and that of a callous man. The former could not leave the addict however fallen he might be to his fate without lending him the strength to give up the evil and not to go to the surroundings, where he might again fall a prey to temptations.

The monster will surely leave Assam, but we fear that the present policy will make him lurk about in the secret nooks and corners of its villages yet for at least another 5 years.

### III

#### *Salt*

That in a country with a coast line of 4,800 miles with mines and hills of salt in Sindh and the Punjab with a natural formation of huge mounds in low lying places along the sea coast, with salt water wells in the Punjab and with various kinds of soil all over the country from which the villagers process out common salt, in a country provided with so many varieties of salt, is it not a wonder why salt, a necessary of life to man and beast, should be taxed?

The salt tax was levied as the result of the Salt Commission appointed in 1836—a Commission composed of Members of Parliament—for the purpose of discovering freights for the ships bound for India, but held up in the harbours of Liverpool for six weeks at times in search of cargo which would at least serve as keel ballast. The ships from Britain already began to export manufactured goods to India in return for

which they were carrying from India raw materials and food products. Both these are voluminous in character as compared with the corresponding manufactured articles. A waggonful of cotton may give only a boxful of cloth, a cart-load of cashew nut and groundnut would give but a case of biscuits. Thus the outgoing shipping of Britain carrying abroad as it did finished goods occupied much less volume than the incoming tonnage. The latter might easily be ten times the former. Therefore, nine ships out of ten on their way to India would have no cargo and have to sail empty on the high seas. And an empty ship without a keel-ballast would run grave risks in its voyage. Accordingly, earth from the Strand in London used to be carried to Calcutta till 1836. This was a sorry waste, although such earth was actually used to cover up a canal leading from the Hoogly to Kalighat Temple and it is said that either the Chouringhee or one of the Circular roads—upper or lower—was made with the London Earth. The Salt Commission, thereupon, recommended that salt should take the place of earth and that in order to have a market for the salt of Cheshire and Liverpool they proposed to make Indian Salt a monopoly of the state and levy a duty of Rs. 3-8-0 per maund. It was Gokhale that first raised his voice in the Imperial Council against this iniquitous impost during Lord Curzon's time and then it was reduced from Rs. 2-8-0 a maund to Rs. 1-4-0 and from then began to vary within a range from Re. 1/- to Rs. 2/- What were the effects of this new impost?

1. The fishermen living on the sea virtually could not get salt from the sea-side for their gruel and so adopted the device of taking a bundle of straw, dipping it in the salt water, drying it as they returned home, burning

- it on that fire, catching up the asbes aod adding them oo to their Ganjee (gruel)—for which offence they had to pay a fine of Rs. 500/- and undergo R. I. for 6 monthbs.
2. The fishermen who used to make dry salted fish with the salt earth by the sea-side were deprived of their occupation which passed on to licensed areas aod licences.
  3. The cattle were deprived of their salt in their fodder because of its expensiveoess.
  4. The annual consumption of salt per capita appreeiably declined, as it appreciably rose as the result of Gokhale's pleading for the reduction of the duty.
  5. Prior to 1836 the ships of the Coromandal Coast used to carry salt to Bengal and bring back Bengal rice. The South was thus deprived of rice while Bengal was deprived of cheap Indian Salt.
  6. The Sea gives the water free of charge, the low lying tracts along the coast line bear the sea waters overflowing the beach—equally free of charge. The Sun dries it all up in April free of charge. The result is that white shining solid bloeks of salt are formed for destroying which by mixing it with mud, the Salt Department sanctioned huge amounts ranging about Rs. 3,000/- annually in one place. The people of the villages roundabout are deprived of their meaos of livelihood which prior to 1836 consisted in gathering such salt and selling it in the villages near by—besides their getting a free supply for domestic huse.
  7. The lands around the salt water wells of the Puojab were 'sweetened' by the water being drawn by local salt manufacturers. But the Salt Law stopped the process, so the salt water remained io the wells. Its level rose and the lands were once again made alkaline and unfit for cultivation.

It has been estimated that the salt mine in Sindh has enough salt for the world for 250 years, and for India for 1250 years. The salt rocks of the Punjab have enough salt for the world for a thousand years. In such a country, salt is taxed for the benefit of the ship-

ping trade of Britain and salt fetches 6 crores of rupees for the Central Government in India. It is not salt alone that is brought to India as keel-ballast but also old newspaper bales, broken porcelain chips, Italian marbles and potatoes and latterly apples from Japan and broken rice from Siam. All these have disturbed the economic position in India and destroyed the livelihood of millions.

The money derived from the monopolies of salt, opium and drink has been rightly described as the 'Sin Money' of India and cannot be legitimately continued for a day under Swaraj.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### VISION OF INDIA UNDER SWARAJ

One interesting piece of speculation is how India would look under Swaraj. Speculation as it may look, the visualisation of India under its own Government is also of a process and not of a picture. Changes in the appearances of a person or the features of a constitution or even the attributes of a civilization are generally imperceptible. Those who live constantly in sight of each other are seldom able to make out the impress of growing years upon their friends. Those who live in society are little able to discover those slow but sure processes of evolution which are constantly impregnating its various institutions. Those who are intimately connected with the vicissitudes of a state whether as rulers or subjects are hardly the persons that can imagine in one sweep the large changes that mark one era from another. Yet these changes do exist and are fairly visible to one who takes a birds-eye-view of a country, society or civilization which comes under their influence.

We have often stated that Swaraj is more a process than a result. Yet we can imagine a day when it may be said to have been established, a point of time when its influences and institutions may be said to begin. Just as you are hardly able to make out the difference between the features or the mental equipment of a person who has just attained majority and of

the same person when he was just about to attain it, so also the attributes of a state which has begun to be self-governing may hardly be distinguishable from those of the same state when it was still a subject State. Yet when we feed ourselves on hopes of Swaraj and appeal to the imagination of people on the basis of the advantages and benefits that the country will derive therefrom, it is our duty to be able to clearly define the changes which will permeate the various institutions and departments of the State or at any rate, the various institutions and departments over which the changes may be expected to operate.

It is our hope that almost the first unit of the country's organization to come under the influence of the new swaraj will be the Village. Today we find the Indian villages utterly disorganised and hopelessly disintegrated. It is no longer the basis of the State or the Civilization in India. You do not look up to the village for types of Hindu or Muslim character, intellect or personality. The large influx of population into towns and the consequent influences exerted upon it by the urban conditions of life have not only introduced striking changes in their personal life but also in the life of the whole nation. The town has become a place that is much sought after, its fashions and fancies set the pace for the rural population, a constant stream of men and women flows from the villages to towns in search of pleasure or professions and the very people who have been leaders of villages have become imbued with a desire to regard towns as their native places and look down upon their native homes in the village with a certain contempt or disregard. Thus, even if they have any civic ideals in them, they concentrate their energies and affections upon the towns

that they live in, and in consequence the villages have suffered in education, in sanitation and in co-operation.

In a Country which had a school almost in every village and which showed 80,000 schools in the Province of Bengal at one time, we now witness the sad spectacle of the population being literate only to the extent of seven per cent., leaving ninety-three out of hundred as illiterates. The ancient Ayurveda and Unani are grossly neglected with the result that the population is deprived of indigenous medical aid and is obliged to resort to towns for the cure of ailments, petty or serious. The cutting of canals with which the country is now interspersed while affording facilities for the irrigation of lands has been a fruitful source of epidemics which have devastated whole Tahsils and Districts by the water-borne diseases so widely prevalent in the country and so little checked because of the limited facilities in respect of medical aid. The Construction of Railways has *bundled* the natural course of drainage which had prior to them been left uninterrupted and this had led to waterlogging in Provinces like Bengal with malaria raging therein with impunity. While education and sanitation have thus suffered, the spirit of co-operation amongst the village-folks has been positively destroyed by the bickerings engendered by the law courts in the country on account of the uncertainties and the spirit of gambling which they have introduced under the guise of administration of justice. Litigation has become a pastime; and if people have a few spare moments and a little spare money over and above those devoted to it, they have learnt to utilise them in the cause of the periodical elections in which they are called upon to participate. It is truly tragic to notice how soon the evils and corrup-

tion of western democracy have penetrated into the civic life of the country. We have indeed got very little of popular rule, but have inherited all the abuses of popular representation.

While the corporate life of the country has thus suffered, the physical wants of the people and their individual bodily growth could not be attended to at all on account of the artificial conditions of life characteristic of modern civilization.

Instead of possessing 90 million tons of food supplied necessary for the 360 millions, the country has only 60 million tons. Indeed, the food supplied is deficient by nearly 40 per cent., and when rendered into terms of individual energy each person instead of being able to develop 1.8 million calories of heat is able to attain only .87 million calories by the food that he gets. The average life of an Indian had been reduced to 24 years as against 50 in England, and 48 in France and Germany. The average income of an Indian is barely Rs. 40 a year as against 2,250 of America and 750 of England and so on. A comparison between the death rate and the birth-rate of the population of India shows that the result has been steadily going down during the five or six decades. The infantile mortality in the country is indeed appalling being  $1/5$  of all children under one year, and a comparison with the figures of Europe reveals the astonishing fact that while 20 per cent of children under one year died in India in the first year, the death-rate in other countries is immensely low.

Leaving aside individuals for one moment let us consider the capacity for produce of our lands, and whether you take rice or cotton, you will find that the Indian lands are considerably lower in point of pro-

ductivity than the lands in England, Germany, France, Japan, Belgium and Holland. All these conditions have given rise to a series of famines which have been particularly numerous in the 20th century and which have devastated whole thousands of square miles of country and millions of population. The famines, like the epidemics, have become unassailable enemies of mankind in India; and Government keeps helplessly looking on while the various causes producing diseases and distress are actively at work. When a fifth of the population of the country is admitted, by men like Sir Charles Elliot and Sir William Wilson Hunter, to be going with but one meal a day, the Empire Marketing Board and the High Commissioner of India himself, Sir Atul Chatterjee, were in 1929 desperately preaching that India had a surplus of rice. If that is so, it means it is paid for by an equivalent of cloth by those countries. It is a simple proposition to say that if only we could manufacture our own cloth we could conserve the money in the country and provide the charges with which the starving people can buy rice and prevent its outflow. There are towns alongside of rivers in our country while the waters in the rivers flow eternally and immeasurably, the people in the towns have not a drop of water to drink. What is wrong and where are things wrong? Somebody said the wrong is with the Municipality of the towns; so it is. Even so while there are millions of mouths starving, there are crores worth of rice being exported. What is wrong and where is the wrong? Certainly with the Government that allows the food to go away while the mouths are left hungry. Food and raiment are the two essentials of a living creature. Whatever luxuries you may import into a country, a country that consents to im-

port its food and raiment is destined to go the way of all flesh one day. Let it be England which has to import its foodstuffs from abroad, of India which has to import its raiment from abroad, both are doomed to perdition. Both were self-content in regard to their food at one time. Both have been subject to such influences. Both have mistaken the seeming flow for a real plenty and when the day of reckoning comes both will have to pay through the nose for their folly. England's food can be guaranteed only when she converts her vast and wild forests into arable land once again, and similarly for India regarding raiment when here millions of looms and spinning wheels are once again at work.

When, therefore, Swaraj is established almost the first thing that devolves upon Government would be to stop this outflow of food, and this inflow of raiment, to restore the looms and the wheels to their pristine position, to relieve the unemployment of the weaver and the spinner and put them in possession of the money with which they can buy their food. The village autonomy shall be restored and village disputes shall be settled within the village premises. The village crafts shall once again be restored to their efficiency and dignity. The 47 per cent of the arable land still lying uncultivated shall be brought under cultivation by the restoration of those tanks and minor irrigation works which have gone out of vogue under the British Government. The havoc committed by the British Engineers in India by cutting channels without bridges shall be repaired and village communications shall be improved so as to make transit of goods easier and quicker. The problem of drainage in Bengal shall be one of the earliest problems to be tackled

by widening the bridges and removing the bars to the course of drainage channels. The evils of litigation shall be reduced to a minimum and an adequate survey of cottage industries shall be made an order to provide collateral occupations to the ryots in their leisure hours more honourable and more remunerative than litigation. Popular education shall receive the earliest attention and moving exhibitions and travelling cinemas and itinerant libraries shall receive as much attention as the primary and secondary schools of today. If possible, examinations shall be abolished and the health as well as the wealth of the village people now being sacrificed in urban education shall be conserved so as to prevent wastage and promote the resources of the people as well as their well-being. Every village shall have a school and a co-operative society and its own co-operative stores, facilities for land mortgage and freedom from the clutches of the Sahukar. Steps shall be taken to undo the evil effects of the literary education and the materialistic cult that have taken firm hold upon the people's affections during the past half a century, and efforts shall be made to develop their emotions and imagination. The life of the people shall be intimately related to their national traditions, their philosophy and religious faith and inter-communal harmony shall be guaranteed by the establishment of Arbitration Boards in all places where conflicts are capable of developing. A network of hospitals and infirmaries shall be established with a section of preventive medicine, which shall broadcast the principles of health and hygiene. Land tenures shall be revised so as to remove the burden of land tax from the poor and the principles of taxation shall be made equitable so as not to weigh heavily upon the petty

cultivator. It shall be the study of Government to induce a system of General Insurance, Insurance of cattle and crops, of lives and health, of honesty and fidelity, of buildings and ships, of accidents and thefts, converting the whole country into one co-operative society bound by ties of mutual helpfulness in times of distress, by a process of organized contributions during times of health and happiness. Borrowing shall be made honourable to the debtor as much as lending to the creditor by all money-lending being limited to co-operative societies and requiring the money-lenders to take out a licence. Crafts and professions shall be controlled by corporate organizations enforcing by tradition and craft code, the laws relating to hours of work, competition and efficiency. Indian art and beauty shall once again recover their past ascendancy and the Indian provincial languages shall be the medium of all administration as well as of education in the Provinces, while Hindi-Hindustani shall be the lingua franca of the nation. The age-long taint of untouchability shall disappear by one stroke of the legislative pen in the last resort and a vigorous process of propaganda and education shall be instituted in order to make temple entry the equal right of all communities. A peace army will take the place of the present army of violence so as to make possible a non-violent State. The Mercantile Marine shall be taken over by indigenous capital. The Key Industries shall be nationalised and the problem of unemployed shall be attacked in all its phases rural and urban, by the revival of craft and the starting of heavy industries. Industries requiring no artistic taste but involving mechanical labour shall be organized with the aid of machinery and large bounties and subventions will be made to those



that foster them. The minimum wage shall be guaranteed to all and land shall be given to the landless. The huge annual drain of 60 crores of rupees impoverishing the country from year to year shall be wiped out as swiftly as possible, consistently with the prospects of developments of the country while the moral drain will be wiped out altogether. Society will no longer have to bow before the decrees of a foreign legislature but the social heads of the country shall be invested with that influence and prestige by which they will be enabled to work miracles in the way of social reform. The lot of women shall naturally claim the first attention of the State; and while divorce shall be made possible under the most carefully scrutinised conditions, facilities shall be afforded both social and economic, to popularise widow marriage and admit women to share in the properties of their husbands and parents. The maltreatment of children so widely prevalent in the country shall be put an end to. The criminals shall be treated as objects of pity rather than of contempt, and efforts shall be made to prevent crime by abolishing drink and treating the criminal more as a psychic patient than as a social sinner. People shall be taught the advantages of international commerce and international culture and an exchange of professors and scholars with the rest of the civilised world shall be perpetually maintained. The Englishman shall be made to feel that he can live in this country as a brother amongst brethren, not as a lord amongst subjects. When he does the former, his investments shall be made safe for him. The vicissitudes of currency and coinage shall not be permitted to disturb the even course of internal trade and international commerce. India shall strive to establish a commonwealth

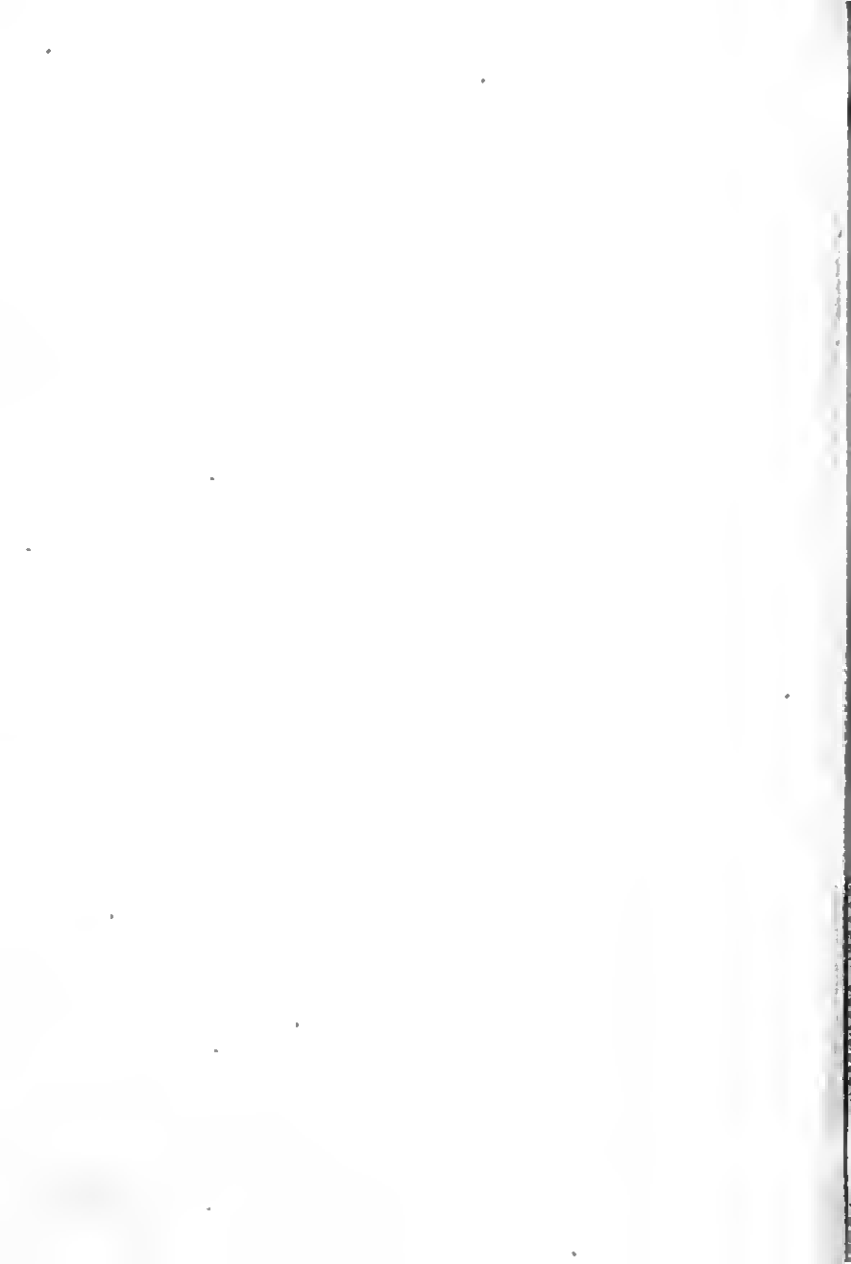
of nations symbolised by allegiance to a common federation, promulgation of common Laws, circulation of common coin and adoption of common postage stamp and when these have been established shall be well able to hope to hasten the advent of that far off divine event—the Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World.

Thus will be inaugurated a new era, the beginnings of a new social order to adopt the language of the day, in which wealth shall cease to rule and democracy shall not continue to mean the sovereignty of forty ruling families of the cliveden group or other allied groups. The State shall not be the property of ancient dynasties and wars shall not be declared as means of providing exercises for the soldiery or of adding to the reputation of kings. The State shall no longer be merely the instrument for the maintenance of Law and Order, but shall be the agency that co-ordinates labour, mobilizes food and correlates food and labour so as to avoid want because of the lack of food products or the wherewithal to buy them. The organs of the State and of society shall not be the tools of the wealthy or the adventurous but shall be the genuine mouthpieces of the nation voicing forth the truth from the four corners of the country and taking measures for the alleviation of suffering, the suppression of tyranny, the spread of health and happiness into every home and the provision of food, raiment and housing into all.

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**PART VI**



## CHAPTER XIX

### CONCLUSION

#### I.

#### *Wide Range of Life's Functions*

Life functions over a wide range of limits. This range is not always visible to the naked eye. The physiologist knows that the *pupil* of the eye is eternally contracting and expanding in order to regulate its functions and 'accommodate' itself to light and distance. The student of Physics or of Medicine who handles a Microscope has his finger and thumb constantly on the fine focuser, even so the Radio-listener. Every second, the fine focus has to be adjusted. The chauffeur at his post has his hands on the steering wheel which he is constantly handling in order to keep the car to the left of the road or direct it along the beaten track. When you think of the contraction and dilatation of the heart 72 times every minute or the expansion and contraction of the lungs 17 times per minute, when you can picture the metabolism of the cells of the tissues in their eternal processes of construction and destruction or *anabolism* and *katabolism* as they are called, both constituting the *metabolism* of the body, when you visualize how the cells of the brain are now stimulating and now inhibiting various kinds of impulses, now emitting commands and now receiving sensations, when you

can picture to yourselves how the *villi* of the bowels are absorbing the vital fluids of the entrails and how the processes of oxygenation of blood and discharge of the products of oxidation are being constantly attended to by the blood in circulation, when you think of the Heavenly orbs at mighty distances from one another being held *in situ* by laws of gravitation, you will realize that this little human organism has all the complexities and details of the universe on the one hand and all the minutiae of the atom on the other. Can we realize how in a copper coin, the solid atoms occupy but  $1/1$  millionth of the volume while the rest is space? A mighty intellect may have its field of operations limited but a capacious heart becomes widely receptive and answers the Upanishadic dictum *Anoraneeyan—Mahatbo Mahaveeyan*—greater than the greatest and smaller than the smallest. That is how Gandhi now soars high into the heavens and now comes down to his spinning wheel. He is capable of visualising a solution of the world's problems and at the same time, think of what is wrong in the structure and the functions of the Dhanush Charkha which Dr. Friedman has recently invented at Sevagram. Because Gandhi swears by the Indian village constructed by our ancient Rishis, it should not be understood that his outlook has anything provincial or sectional in it. If it were so, he would easily reconcile himself to his leadership of Indian Nationalism and need not have surrendered it on more than one occasion, just as he was within an ace of success. He bears no ill-will to the opponent and has always been considerate towards his view point. He has extended this courtesy not only to those who oppose his principles and cult amongst the Indian politicians but also to the very "enemy" of the

Indian nation,—the Britisher. He is not merely a beacon light to the generations to come but is "a religious leader, a man not of local or national but universal significance."

### *Gandhism a Way of Living*

It is thus that "the name of Gandhi even in his lifetime has passed" as Pearl Buck says (p. 63), "beyond the meaning of an individual to the meaning of a way of living in our troubled modern world." Much to the annoyance of his followers (of the smaller build) he repeatedly proclaimed that he is a friend of the British and bore no ill-will against them, that he would not embarrass them in their distress by embarking upon a Satyagraha campaign. "The Philosopher must be no partisan," says Hocking (p. 111), "he must be above the battle." This considerateness to the opponent has disarmed him. Gandhi himself points out in his autobiography that Gen. Smuts felt greatly drawn to his ways and we have already quoted what one of the General's secretaries said to Gandhi.

The fact that Gandhi ceased to be a four anna member since October, 1934 did not cut off his interest in the Congress. He has been the unofficial adviser and referee arbitrator, and judge of Congress affairs these six years. The differences that arose at Wardha in June, 1940, and in Delhi in July 1940, over the question of extending the principle of non-violence to the system of Defence under Swaraj—India without armies, could easily have been overlooked by him at the time of the Poona Session (July '40) of the A. I. C. C. (offering conditional material aid in the war) which confirmed the decisions of the Working Committee at Wardha



and Delhi. No leadership of the nation, nay Swaraj based upon force is nothing to him. He is a world teacher, the founder of a new faith, who is willing to work through an organization so long as that organization is willing to be a whole-hogger of his principles and philosophy. He cannot consent to be cabined and cribbed by *its* limitations. He outgrows its boundaries and discovers forthwith his *fourth* dimension to rise above the three dimensioned Committees, Conferences and Congresses that tend to coup up his soul. Gandhi has nothing in this world that he would or could call his own. The Sabarmati Asram was his pet child but in 1933 during his struggles and fasts for the Harijan cause in Jail, by one stroke of the pen, gave it away to the Harijans for their uplift. The "Young India" Press which was forfeited to Government in 1930, he never claimed back. The Gandhi Seva Sangh itself—which must be dear to him has its strength reduced from 180 to 9, being now composed of men devoted to research in the field of Truth and Non-violence.

Gandhi's philosophy is not for local application. It is not conceived as a remedy for a local wrong. It is meant as a panacea for a universal malady. And nothing has ever made him compromise his principles, eternal and abiding in character, and bend them to the exigencies of the times. Expediency as opposed to principle is not in his lexicon or make up. Not that he has not agreed to compromises, for compromise is the very essence of Satyagraha, but that his principles and philosophy do not admit of discounts or premiums in moral transactions. To quote Holmes, (p. 113) "what other men have taught as a personal discipline, Gandhi has transformed into a social programme for

the redemption of the world." In such a mighty and formidable task there must forsooth be, what to the baser minds appears as inconsistency and impracticality. But "the so-called inconsistencies and impracticalities of Gandhiji, are," in the words of Sophia Wadia (P. 298) "understood when we see him as a Soul, and when we take into account the fact that he is one who refuses to make compromises between his head and his heart, who declines to go against his own conscience, who views all events not from the mundane standpoint but as avenues for Soul-learning for himself and of soul-service of others."

### *Conflict with vested interests*

Gandhi's programme has brought him and the Congress into violent conflict with various vested interests so that the Congress and Gandhi make enemies :—

through Untouchability, of the Sanatanist Brahmins and the Caste Hindus,  
 through University Reform, of the Professors,  
 through Prohibition, of the toddy drawer,  
 through National Education, of the teachers,  
 through Panchayets, of the lawyer and the Law tout,  
 through Khaddar, of the Mill-owners,  
 through Sales Tax, of the Merchants,  
 through Property tax, of the Rich,  
 through Land tax, of the Poor,  
 through Cottage Industry, of the Capitalists,  
 through Debt Relief Act, of the Money-lender and  
 through Tenancy Legislation, of the Zamindar,  
 through pounded rice, of the mills,  
 through the elevation of labour, of the landlords,  
 through retrenchment, of the officers,  
 through Indianization, of the Europeans,

through Hindi, of the Justice Party,  
 through abolition of titles, of the plutocrats,  
 through religious endowments, of the priests and *mahants*.

*All, however, harmonized in the balanced life*

But through his spirit of timely concession coupled with unhesitating affirmation of the ideals, Gandhi has succeeded in moving a whole nation to outlive the narrow interests and get clear of the hurdles that beset their path to national emancipation. The secret of Gandhi's success lies in his correct grasp of the principles of a balanced life.

The balanced life in effect is what we must all aim at and what Gandhi himself would not discountenance. In politics it is called the centre which is not so conservative as the Right or so radical as the Left. It is otherwise called the cross bench mind—neither the front bench which is the party in power nor the back bench which can hardly make itself ever heard. But apart from, why—as a part of these,—you have the need for the balanced mind which regulates the even operation of opposing elements, indeed the production of resultant opposite forces. Sometimes the very virtues of a man tend to become his vices. It is a virtue doubtless to be radical in thought but a vice not to be able to effect a compromise between oneself and one's opponent. A person clings to his views. That is good. He may even be right 100 p.c. judged by absolute standards. But he is not the only factor in society. If that were so there would be no such thing as views. Views are theories relating to the relationship of persons or objects or persons and objects. Thus views imply a gregarious life which implies in turn adjust-

ments, compromises and 'give and take'. A sense of perspective is a governing factor. So is a sense of proportion and propriety. How much you have to speak, where and under what circumstances, is a matter left to a refined sensibility. A generous man cannot be a reckless spendthrift, nor can an economical person be a pronounced miser. A strong-willed thinker cannot be obstinate, nor can adjustability mean surrender to the opponent. Obedience is not subservience nor can self-respect be tyranny. Oftentimes the tyrant over a subordinate becomes the slave of his superior. He who spends a hundred rupees on a railway ticket stints a rupee on a dinner or a quarter of a rupee on a porter. Life courses along strange contradictions and the balanced character is the correlation of these incompatibles in one's life.

### *Gandhi—The Allround Man*

It is within the experience of most of us how the development of a particular faculty operates generally to the detriment of other faculties. In the range of Physiology this truth is observed in the lame man developing the mighty brawns of his arms as well as of his Thorax. The loss of one arm is followed by a compensatory development of its fellow. As man has developed his vocal powers, his intellect and emotions, he has lost the auditory powers of the snake, the olfactory capacities of the bloodhound and the ocular functions of the birds. Likewise amongst men themselves, a high physical development coexists with a poor intellectual acumen. Sublime spiritual powers are found to the accompaniment of an attenuated body. Gandhi while he has prescribed to himself rigid dis-

ciplines of body, has never starved it. His emotions are controlled by his intellect while his intellect is chastened by his emotions. They act and react upon each other and help to establish a balanced life side by side with a full life. That is how we see in Gandhi's personality a human side not less ardent and sublime than its deeper religious aspect. His disciplines are exacting but not vindictive or retributive. He has intense sympathy for the wrong doer but cannot extenuate or explain away the wrong itself. He is conciliatory—not compromising, stern, not harsh and he is easily able to yoke his world-conquering will to his heaven-aspiring soul. Through Truth he regulates the scheme of life in a rigid and unbending manner. Through *Ahimsa* he pours over alike his followers and opponents, his emollient, affections as a salve to the sharp strokes of his truth. Truth is apt to be harsh and scaring, *Ahimsa* is bound to be soft and soothing. As a truthful man he is not cruel, as a *ahimsic*, he is not indulgent. It is the happy and harmonious combination of both these qualities that makes *Satyagraha* a perfected cult and the first *Satyagrahi* in Gandhi, the nearest approach to the *Purna Purush* combining deep religious fervour (*devotion*) with sublime human sentiment. This blend of religious and human aspects has helped Gandhi to evolve as Barker (p. 61) would say a blend of the "great Indian tradition of devout and philosophic religion and the Western tradition of civil and political liberty in the life of the community."

Gandhi's self-respect is earned by his invariable respect for others. Whenever Dr. Besant met him he rose and went forward to receive her. To this day the memory of Gokhale is cherished with that rever-

ence which is due to a guru. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is to him a patriarch whose counsel on all matters is piously treasured up in his heart. The Ali Brothers are remembered and referred to with the same deep devotion and respect as one would show to the *Aulya* (Vali) and the *Rasul* (Rasuls of old). It is said that courtesy to seniors is reverence, courtesy to equals is respect and courtesy to juniors is affection. It is difficult to come across any public character who observes these amenities of life with greater sincerity and whole-heartedness.

Gandhi's abiding faith in his philosophy makes him feel ever young. When some of his own immediate followers have stated that old age was telling on him and that he was obsessed by his own ideas, he was assuredly touched to the quick. The fact is that he has discovered the elixir of life, for what sustains a man and his labours is the faith that is in him, the confidence that he is ministering to the needs of humanity and the consciousness that so long as his direction is right, he is on the right path to his destination. Gandhi, it is true, after he has completed the Psalmist's span of three score and ten, still plans for a future, which may be long in coming or may be with us the next moment. It is his conviction that the last portion of a journey takes much less time than the first and that as a Satyagrahi moves towards his objective, the latter which in the earlier days appeared to recede from him, now moves towards him with accelerated speed. A Satyagrahi being a votary at the shrine of non-violence is always self-confident, while the apostle of violence judges others by his own weakness and vacillation, by his own doubts and difficulties.

No simpler and more graphic estimate of Gandhi,

as a man, can be given than that we owe to J. H. Holmes (p. 114) of the 'community church,' New York, who nearly twenty years ago had the prevision to declare to the American public and to the world that 'Gandhi is the greatest man in the world.' Says Holmes:—"He is modest, gentle, unfailingly kind. His sense of fun is irresistible, his simplicity of manner captivating. Quiet, almost soft in his ways, he has an indomitable will and an iron courage. His sincerity is transparent, his devotion to truth inexorable. Having nothing to lose, his position is impregnable to attack. Sacrificing everything himself, he can ask anything of others. Material considerations, worldly cares and ambitions have long since vanished from his life. The spirit, as manifest in truth and love, possesses him utterly. 'My creed,' says Gandhi 'is service of God and therefore of humanity.....and service means pure and love.'"

He seemed to the peasant a being from a different planet, a being endowed with almost supernatural powers over the forces of nature, a being to be regarded with an awe which often became servility, a being to be trembled before and implicitly obeyed. It has been well said that the greatest single gift which Mr. Gandhi has conferred upon his fellow countrymen is the power of conquering this fear-complex in the presence of the white man. He has taught the Indian and especially the Indian peasant to stand erect, to look the white man in the face undismayed and deliberately to disobey his orders, if he believes them to be disastrous for the well-being of his country. Fear is infectious. But so also is fearlessness. Mr. Gandhi has in himself a spirit of fearlessness which he has the faculty, superlatively, of transmitting to other people. He has put the courage into Indian peasants to refuse unjust land taxes in spite of all that district officials might do against them. To those who know India this in itself will be sufficient proof of the extraordinary quality of his personality in regard to the conquest of fear.

To one who has thus made himself the master of his senses, there is a perfect equipoise, a sense of serenity and repose, coexistent with a dash and daring, a spirit of heroism and adventure and an operation of volcanic energy pouring forth its lava of molten ideas, ideals and ideology into distant centres. The soul force gives thus the static as well as the dynamic virtues that enable the possessor to manifest his abundant love, love that, in the words of Rufus M. Jones (p. 165) "does not want to be rewarded, honoured, or esteemed; its only desire is to propagate itself and become the blessing and happiness of everything that wants it. And, therefore, it meets wrath and evil and hatred and opposition with the same one will as the light meets the darkness only to overcome it with all its blessings. For the wrath of an enemy, the treachery of a friend, and every other evil, only helps the Spirit of Love to be more triumphant, to live its own life and find all its own blessings in a higher degree"

Gandhi is our pilot. He is at the helm. We are the passengers. There are the oarsmen—members of the Working Committee whose duty is to propel the boat. It is the pilot that directs it. Our duty as passengers is to sit quiet and move out when permitted. We should not get restless in the boat swing over to one side or the other. Despite all irritation, temptation or provocation, we must remain calm and unmoved in our seats. Else the balance would be upset and we would all be drowned. Or shall we say Gandhi is our steward whose acts appear difficult to follow. If you want to make dough you must deal with the flour and the water harshly. Then alone you get the bread in loaves. In order to make of India dough of the right consistency, Gandhi has to mix the flour of



popular passion that flies away with the waters of truth and non-violence. That is why Gandhi appears to be moving hither and thither aimlessly but really purposefully.

Gandhi is really like the trunk of a tree which strikes its roots firm and deep into the earth all round and bears on its head the numerous boughs and branches, the infinite blossom and fruit. The central factor is the trunk. Gandhi is the leader whose position is made strong and immovable for him by his following and the members of the Working Committee are the roots some of which are more important than others but they give the stability and sustenance to the trunk. The arborization on the top represents the *Aum* and *Avam*,—the masses—of the Congress—the delegates, visitors, voters, followers, admirers, adherents and members.

## II

### *Where Does Gandhism Reside*

What is Gandhism and where does it reside? Not on the tongue, nor in the clothes, not amongst the transient social forms refined or rude which mottle the surface of human life. The Asram has no monopoly of it, nor has the stately pillared mandaps of the Congress. Its home is not amongst the trees of the wild forest nor on the banks of the running brooks. Its dwelling is in the heart. It speaks in a score of languages but in one tongue. It prescribes a hundred paths to the same goal. It performs a thousand kinds of service in loyalty to the same ideal. It resides in the villages of India—not perhaps in its pristine purity

—overlaid with the scrap-heap of modern accretions which we choose to call our civilization.

The towns and cities are but the colonies of the emigrant villagers who have not only abandoned their homes and hearths but shed much of their ancient national bias, and as denizens of urban areas, have changed their manner of life, their attitude to the villages and their organization on the basis of self-sufficiency, their fashions and fabrics, their callings, their outlook and their tastes and tendencies. But Indian nationalism resides in the villages and it is the revival of the best aspects of it that Gandhism contemplates and comprises. India is still four-fifths rural in its structure, composition and ideal. There is an unbroken continuity of the perennial stream of Indian civilization and culture through all these ages and the various tributaries that have added their waters to those of the central stream have only served to enrich them in content and volume.

Gandhi, as a phenomenon of the twentieth century, as an emanation of the Divine being, has worked for four decades in order to establish the principles of liberty and justice in the world, of public duty and humanity. In other words, he has worked for the emancipation of enslaved countries on the one hand and the protection of smaller nationalities. Today if the whole of Europe is considered one family, it consists of a number of rich inmates with their numerous poor relations. But the latter are being crowded out. To India, however, the principle that Gandhi has applied is that of liberation from Britain's thralldom.\*

\*It is under the guidance of such a teacher that Congress has sought to impress politics with the ideal of service, emphasised the need for a wider

culture and a higher patriotism amongst the classes and laboured for establishing village leadership. Congress has, in fact, founded a new religion—the religion of politics. We cannot, without being false to our creed, regard any great human issue as outside the sphere of religion. For religion stands not for any particular dogma or method of worship but for a higher life, a spirit of sacrifice, and a scheme of self-dedication. And when we speak of the Religion of Politics we merely make the sordid politics of the day sacred, the compartmental politics of the day, comprehensive, the competitive politics of the day co-operative.

In this attitude and frame of mind it is that we have pleaded for Truth and Legitimacy as the cardinal factors in the upbuilding of Indian Nationalism. Untruth has always gained earlier and cheaper victories in life, dissimulation and publicity have often triumphed easily over reason and rectitude. Yea, law and logic have scored over life itself in the past. But these victories and triumphs are as partial as they are fleeting, and have only betrayed the victors into unenviable positions. On a larger scale, the triumphs of the Great War have brought no success to the victors over the vanquished. On a smaller scale, the conquest, so-called, of England over India has brought no lasting happiness to the former as against the latter. The policy underlying the conduct of statesmen in organising the various Round Table Conferences has not ensured for them India as the out-house for ever of England. Every wave of repression has engendered a spirit of resistance, now manifesting itself as Civil Disobedience and now taking sterner and fiercer forms at the hands of the rising generation. To say that we have failed in our programme of Non-co-operation

is but to read the wish for the thought, for in the long last, every failure is only seemingly such and is in reality but a step to success. Success itself is but the last phase of a series of failures.

Thus do we judge the programme of the Congress. That programme is of a two-fold character. On the aggressive side, it has given battle to Government in a manner which no civilized Government dare condemn. Non-violence, in thought, word and deed, has been the key-note of that fight and Gandhi has been acknowledged the Chief Constable of India. Government may have affected to abominate his cult of Satyagraha but who can condemn the hold of Truth and of non-violence on the affections of the people? In an age when Royal families have been annihilated and monarchies have been upset and democratic constitutions have given way, in an age, too, when the bi-party or the tri-party system of old has disappeared from politics and the rise of opposition is subdued not by defeating the opponent at the polls but by annihilating the party literally, to speak of non-violence may sound a mockery. Our recent experiences have furnished a fit and timely warning to us that the victories won through bloodshed are only maintained through bloodshed and lost through more of it, and that, when once force has become installed as the arbiter between two nations, it tends to butt in between any two communities and, for the matter of that, between any two individuals on all possible occasions.

On the constructive side, the programme of the Congress has been simple,—incredibly so. We must admit it may not have appealed to the sophisticated classes of the country, who live in towns and cities, wear foreign cloth, speak an alien tongue and serve

an outside master. A census of our towns would be a study in itself, revealing the surprising fact that almost every alternate man is dependent for his living, for his prosperity and for his fame, upon the good-will of the foreign rulers. These facts are not discerned readily, for we do not know who our masters really are. But we know that they range from the constable to the Excise Inspector, the Bank Agent and the English tailor. The P.W.D. lascar, the Revenue Collector, the Bench Magistrate and the Bill discounter are all the unpaid representatives of the British Empire Ltd., whose Local Board of Directors is the Government of India with sub-offices in the various Provinces. The British Government is entrenched behind the seven *prakarans* of the Army, the Police and the Services, the Courts, the Councils, and the Colleges, the Local Bodies and the titled aristocracy. The eighty per cent of rural population in the country lives in fear of the Revenue authorities and the balance of urban population, in fear of the Municipalities, Local Boards, Income-tax officers, Excise authorities and the Police.

It has, therefore, become supremely important to cast off fear resulting from a recognition of force, and plant, in its stead, hope and courage that spring from a genuine love of non-violence. The constructive programme has, therefore, taken on hand, activities typical of the respective classes which bring Congressmen engaged in them into close touch with the masses. When, therefore, we speak of khaddar, we not only help the poor to find a subsidiary occupation or even a living wage, but give them an opportunity of cultivating self-respect by throwing off the symbol of slavery that is on their backs. We conserve the sacredness of the home and give the craftsman, that

creative joy through the exercise of his craft which forms the true index of civilization. When people are asked to pay a bit more for khaddar, we teach them to give a voluntary bounty to a national industry which it is the legitimate duty of the State really to provide, but which it would not. Above all, we teach simplicity to our people and with simplicity of living come sublimity of thought, ideas of self-respect, self-sufficiency, self-reliance and self-realization. What we have sought to achieve on the economic plane through khaddar, we strive to attain on the moral plane through prohibition, and, on the social, through the removal of untouchability. There must be something unspeakably low, not to say worse, in a State objecting to the organisation of prohibition amongst its citizens. The problem is far too simple to need any discussion. The Nation is mainly composed of the two great communities—Hindu and Muslim—both of whom base their religious teachings on the prohibition of drink. The temperance movement in the country has worked on this basis; yet, when the Nation is serious and constructs this moral plank in its political platform and organizes it by picketing, Government comes down on the Congress like a wolf on the fold. When the Congress Governments have introduced prohibition,—much to the universal satisfaction of the people concerned,—notably of the women of the families, the exit of Congress Ministers from office has served as a signal for a retrograde step in Bombay and Behar and for stagnation in South India.

We have not fared better when we add a social plank to this platform in the removal of untouchability. The British premier's decision had sought to carve up the Harijans into a separate electorate. Only the 'fast

unto death' of the great leader of India has made an amendment possible of that undesirable decision and document and has established a broad unity in the Hindu community, though with some internal compartmentalism still lingering. And when we have sought to remove the prevailing bar to the entry of the Harijans into temples, even when a plebiscite has strengthened the hands of their trustees, Government have interposed their irresistible opposition to a progressive measure which is but permissive, and nipped it in the bud.

The problem that the country has to face is one of supreme complexity with a Government whose psychology is to '*divide and rule*' and whose strategy is to '*rule and divide*,' with towns and cities arrayed against villages, with the classes having interests conflicting with those of the masses, with an unholy opposition organised against elementary reforms, with an embargo upon khaddar, with obstruction to communal equality, and with resistance to the fostering of moral virtues. These have made it abundantly clear that Swaraj cannot be won, if at all, only through the votaries of English education, the followers of the learned professions and the captains of trade or industrial magnates. New values have had to be evolved. The power of the Nation has had to be developed through the development of a sense of national consciousness in the masses living in the villages, and their confidence secured not by a mere delivery of lectures or by contributions to the Press but by a day-to-day programme of service rendered to the people at large. Once this confidence is secured, the programme set forth by the Congress for the emancipation of the Nation will be readily followed. Swaraj may not by this process rea-

dily fall into our hands like a ripe apple, but it will soon be evident that the act of service rendered to the people is a stone, well and truly laid, in the foundations of Swaraj, and every disability removed from society in its socio-economic structure is a storey raised in building up the edifice of Swaraj. The process is doubtless slow, but the results are certain and abiding. Thus has the Congress taken its message to the villages and established what we have described as village leadership through the guidance and under the inspiration of Gandhi.

### III

#### *Gandhi an Archaeologist*

Gandhi is not merely a saint and philosopher, an economist and politician, a philanthropist and humanitarian, but a student of history, geology and archaeology, one who has unearthed the treasures buried under the debris of ages and like gold and silver, like a diamond that lies embedded in a mass of rock, these treasures of Indian culture have remained for centuries intact, untarnished and precious as ever before. Gandhi is not merely a student of history, but he is making modern history, revising and reinterpreting ancient history,—not history of dates and events, of sovereigns and dynasties, of wars and treaties,—*all*, mere workings out of violence and hatred, but of “history which is the record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul.” The history of the body—its passions and prejudices, is what we and our children are wont to call by that name. The workings of the soul, of passions not let loose and



indulged but curbed and restrained, trained and tempered, chastised and chastened, is called culture and civilization. 'The Vedas, and the Vedangas, the Sas-tras and Shaddarsanas, the Itihasas and the Puranas, the lives of the saints, and sages, of the heroes and martyrs, founders of religions and propounders of philosophies these constitute the history of India in its sublimer aspect. Of this sublimated essence of India's national life, Gandhi is the latest and highest exponent. Sublime as his teachings are, integrated as his being is, Gandhi claims to be but a man amongst men. He is *primus inter pares*, the first among equals, not an infalible man, but one who has inherited the culture of ages and makes it his sole guide to the discovery of the Truth and of non-violence which is only Truth in Action. It is thus that he has in the words of Edward Thompson (p. 294) "brought into being a new cult—the cult of Gandhism." Gandhi has been sought out by some of the leading characters of the world. When he went to England in connection with the Second Round Table Conference, he visited on invitation various schools, seminaries, settlements, factory centres, churches and philanthropic institutions. The children of Dr. Maria Montessori's school gave a reception in his honour. Society ladies joined his prayers in the bleak hours of the early morning. Streams of visitors flowed towards the Kingsley Hall,—his lodging in the East end of London. Lord Sankey gave him the first place to his left in the St. Jame's palace and treated him with the utmost deference and has recognized that "Gandhi seemed to be guided from time to time by some inner voice" (p. 264). Eminent men of letters like Gilbert Murray and Sir Michael Sadler, the master of Balliol and P. C. Lyon

met him and subjected him to an ordeal of cross examination for three hours but he maintained his composure. In Rome, princess Maria, the youngest daughter of the King of Italy, sought private interview with him. Dr. Rufus M. Jones of Pennsylvania (Haverford College) owns that Gandhi has "had a profound influence on my own philosophy of life and on my actual way of life" (p. 161). The King of England receives him in his blanket over his shoulders and his sandals under his feet. The poor of London flocked round him. The weavers and spinners of Lancashire crowded about him and asked him to take their textiles for India. To every one, he had his appropriate answer. He observed court manners at the Buckingham Palace and would not argue with the King. He had a kind word to say to the unemployed in Manchester. Verily has it been said—and said very correctly by Edward Thompson that "not since Socrates has the world seen his equal for absolute self-control" (p. 287).

We have seen all along how Gandhi is essentially a man of religion. But his religion is such that it gives equal respect to all other religions for Gandhi himself has told us repeatedly that *Ahimsa* is the soul of Truth and that non-violence is the highest religion and he has epitomized the whole of his gospel in the following few words:—

"If you express your love—*Ahimsa*—in such a manner that it impresses itself indelibly on your so-called enemy, he must return that love." That is the faith of the person of whom Llewelyn Powys writes (p. 234), "Insulted and buffeted, threatened and beaten, and on one occasion nearly lynched by a white mob in Durban, he has not been embittered." Verily, the world is puzzled over the phenomenon of a figure so

small and a soul so big. Imagine the reverence in which Gandhi is held by Western Divines like Miss Maude Royden of seven oaks—a doctor of Divinity when she says (p. 254) that the best Christian in the world to-day is a Hindu or when Llewelyn Powys of Clavadel—Switzerland, (p. 235) objects to Nietzsche's paradox that *there had been only one Christian and he died on the Cross,* on the score that the philosopher did not live long enough to observe this new guru. If Nietzsche had been alive he might have said:—

“There had been but one Christian then and he died on the Cross.

There is but one Christian to-day and he lives at Sevagrama.”

No more spectacular incident is noticed in history than Christian leaders from all parts of the world, making a pilgrimage to Wardha and waiting upon Gandhi for light, 1900 years after Christ's death. They seek his advice regarding the best method of applying Christ's teaching to the Christian nations of the earth engaged in international wars. “What can I as a Christian do to contribute to International peace? How can non-violence be made effective for establishing peace?” Here is Gandhi's sublime reply. “You as a Christian can make an effective contribution by non-violent action even though it may cost you your all. Peace will never come until the great powers courageously decided to disarm themselves. It seems to me that recent events must force that belief upon the great powers.” “I have an implicit faith—a faith, that to-day burns brighter than even after half a century's experience of unbroken practice of non-violence,—that mankind can only be saved through non-violence which is the central teaching of the Bible, as I

have understood the Bible." It is thus that Gandhi had to "carry coals to New Castle." He has discovered and acquired the art of Satyagraha in a Christian land, as the result of fierce thinking over the insult heaped upon him as a coloured man when he was bundled out of the Railway train and left at a wayside station in severe cold. He has practised and perfected the art in his own home against what he calls 'his own stupidity' in overcoming the obstinacy of his wife. He has applied his principles first in Champaran then in Khairā and Borsad to secure the redress of local grievances. He then almost perfected it through his indefinite fast to secure the demands of the Ahmedabad mill labourers, later steadily extended the scope of his experiments to the nation's problems and to the farthest limits of national frontiers. In all these he has met with varying degrees of success, but he has secured the world's recognition of his cult,—not as a political slogan or shibboleth, not as a mystic lore, not as a religious miracle, but as a science and art. That the Christian leaders of the world should have chosen to sit at his feet that they may better answer Christ if he came to Chicago or London, is perhaps the highest compliment that the laity or the clergy could have showered upon him. Through voluntary poverty, through abounding love, through untiring service,—all made possible by his unflagging faith in a power higher than human ken has yet discerned, he has been able to raise himself to the position of a world teacher and if we may gently vary Reginald Reynold's language (p. 247), "the greatest amongst the fools of God who are deaf and defer to none and ever perversely shun the prudent way"

Gandhi has inherited the Kingdom of the earth

—truly by his meekness—for millions obey him—not because of his earthly power, but because “he speaketh like a man of authority” and possesses it all. But Gandhi is the last man to make himself a victim of prestige. He admitted he had committed a Himalayan blunder in precipitating Satyagraha in 1919. He confessed his Rajkot fast was tainted with *Himsa*. He who has been ready to own up his own shortcomings has never hesitated to declare the follies of his own following. The frequent outbursts of violence by his own countrymen from the lawlessness of the mobs in Amritsar which led to the massacre of the Jallianwallabagh, from the outrage (murder by burning alive twenty one police constables and a sub-inspector and the police station) of Chauri Chaura in February, 1922, from the frequent Hindu-Muslim riots at Kohat, Multan, Saharanpur, Benares, Cawnpore, Calcutta, Delhi, Bangalore, Gulbargah, Secunderabad, Allahabad, Bombay and a host of other places on to Bannu and Sukkur of recent times, have all been commented upon in unequivocal terms. In 1919 he declined to continue to be in the Congress unless the Amritsar Congress condemned the excesses of the mobs—which the subjects committee was at first unwilling to do. And it had to revise its previous decision. When the Ali brothers made a speech in 1921 which was on the border line of non-violence and violence, he induced them to declare absence of all intention of violence on their part. He has never taken advantage of the enemy's distress nor failed to give the advantage to his enemy of the distempers in his own camp. In 1934, in his Patna statement, dated April 7th, he said on the eve of suspending the Civil Disobedience movement:—

I feel that the masses have not received the full message of Satyagraha owing to its adulteration in the process of transmission. It has become clear to me that spiritual instruments suffer in their potency when their use is taught through nonspiritual media, spiritual messages are self-propagating.

If Gandhi has received the approbation and praise of the contemporary world—not merely of followers but of critics including philosophers, saints and ecclesiastical dignitaries, it is a sufficient cause for gratification. It is, however, one thing for people who are led to a fight under his leadership or for those who are unconcerned but dispassionate spectators, to shower their encomiums upon Gandhi but it is quite a different thing for the Government of India publicly to share such admission and admiration in their state documents

Here is an extract from "India" for 1919—a Government of India publication:—

Mr. Gandhi is generally considered a Tolstoyan of high ideals and complete selflessness. Since his stand on behalf of the Indians in South Africa, he has commanded among his countrymen all the traditional reverence with which the East envelope a religious leader of acknowledged asceticism. In his case he possesses the added strength that his admirers are not confined to any religious sect. Since he took up his residence in Ahmedabad, he has been actively concerned in social work of varied kinds.

His readiness to take up the cudgels on behalf of any individual or class whom he regards as being oppressed has endeared him to the masses of his countrymen. In the case of urban and rural population of many parts of the Bombay Presidency his influence is unquestioned, and he is regarded with a reverence for which adoration is scarcely too strong a word. Believing as he does in the superiority of 'Soul Force' over material might, Mr. Gandhi was led to believe that it was his duty to employ against the Rowlatt Act that weapon of Passive Resistance which he had used effectively

in South Africa. It was announced on the 24th February that he would lead a Passive Resistance or Satyagraha movement if the Bills were passed.

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Mr. Gandhi expressly condemned any resort to material force. He was confident that he would be able by a process of passive disobedience of Civil Laws to coerce the Government into abandoning the Rowlatt Act. On the 18th March he published a pledge regarding the Rowlatt Bills which ran as follows: 'Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bill known as the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Bill No. 1 of 1919 and the Criminal Law Emergency Powers Bill No. 2, 1919, are unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual on which the safety of India as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming Law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these Laws and such other laws as the Committee hereafter to be appointed may think fit, and we further affirm that in the struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person and property.'

Gandhi has all along waged a *Dharma Yuddha*—the same that is described in our Epics which used to be fought, however on the plane of circumscribed violence. Is it any wonder that he does not make himself the target of an enemy's attack? Friends have attacked him a good deal. "The spiritual authority of one (such) unarmed man over great multitudes is," in the happy language of Gilbert Murray (p. 198), "in itself wonderful, but when that man, not only abjures violence and helps his enemies in their need, but also recognizes his own human fallibility, he claims unanswerably the admiration of the whole world."

Gandhi's success cannot be measured according to the foot rule or the measure tape. Success and failure

are but relative terms in Satyagraha—They are negligible factors in the eye of the Geeta. All success is only a question of time. It is the faith in the virtue of our cause that must be our sole concern. With such faith within, Gandhi has in his fights placed himself always at the head—in settlement he has been moderate. He has readily recognized that “the aggregate opinion of nation moves slowly, like those old migrations of entire tribes it is encumbered with much household stuff. A thousand unforeseen things may divert or impede it, a hostile check or the temptation of present convenience may lead it to settle far short of its original aim. The want of some guiding intellect and central will, may disperse it, but experience shows one constant element of progress which those who aspire to be leaders should keep in mind, namely that the place of wise general should be oftener in the rear or the centre than the extreme front. The secret of permanent leadership is to know how to be moderate.” This has been realized by Gandhi not in the non-violent fights he has organized—for there he is in the van not in the rear—but in the settlements that followed them.

Gandhi, the man of destiny, born to emancipate his country, has first emancipated himself by the conquest of desire and of fear. He is the modern Messiah of a world torn asunder by violence and war.

He embodies in his life a new synthesis of the four *Varnas* and the four *Asramas* of the Hindus. *Tyaga* his instrument of *Moksha*, is the focussing point of the three cults of *Bhakti*, *Jnana* and *Karma*. He is the saint that does not seek the jungle or the mountain, the seabeach or the river bed for a meditative life but performs his *tapas* in the living world through the practice



of *Suchi*, *Dana* and *Dharma*, *Daya* and *Kshama*.

In his warfare with evil his strategy is truth and his tactic is non-violence. To him, therefore, *means* and *ends* are interchangeable, *success* and *failure* are one *happiness* and *misery* are the same. His appeal is to the spirit and through spirit, he compels attention from the war lords of Europe, and from famous Statesmen, from celebrated poets and eminent Divines. His colleagues receive his doctrine with a certain high-power faith and in propagating them to the community at large, transform it into their low-power reason. It is thus that he has inaugurated his new scheme of Satyagraha based upon *Satya* and *Ahimsa*.

"What is Truth" asked Pilate once, and "what is non-violence" asks India today. People ask for a definition and the dimensions of Gandhi's *Ahimsa*. Non-violence is a direction not a destination, an attitude, not an attainment. Light not darkness, Truth, not falsehood, Love, not hatred and Forgiveness not revenge,—these constitute the content of Satyagraha. They are the weft in the fabric of this weaver and farmer's Indian nationalism woven on his warp of politics. Politics is no longer an adventure but is a religion and philosophy, a science and art, a service and worship.

Gandhi has completed the Psalmist's span of three score and ten and a year more. He is essentially a man, a man of business, a man of wit and wisdom, a man of humour and hilarity, a correct man, a many-sided man, yea, a full man. He is the tenth and the greatest of the avatharas, a Buddha regenerate, a Christ reborn, the Sthithaprajna of the Geeta and the nearest approach to the Poorna Purusha of the Upanishads. Blessed be they who live in his age, twice blessed, they

that imbibe his principles and thrice blessed, they that propagate his philosophy. Gandhi may die but Gandhism will live for ever. Yea, Gandhism may die but Gandhi will live for ever :—

This warrior in combat near Heaven with a prospect of  
unseen victory,  
Blowing a bugle that rings to the last gulf of Hell,  
This lonely hero challenging the future for response.  
Withered and thin,  
But with a mammoth soul shaking the world in fear—  
Through this man love, profaned and ignored,  
Through this man life's independence, shattered and fallen,  
Through this man, body-labour bereft of honour and prize,  
Cry rebel-call against tyranny; to God's justice be praise !  
A sad chanter of life close to the mother-earth,  
(Where is there a more burning patriot than this man ?)  
A lone seeker of truth denying the night and self-pleasure,  
(Where is there a more prophetic soul than this man's ?)  
A pilgrim along the endless road of hunger and sorrow.

—Yone Noguchi (p. 201)

## APPENDIX I

### *Cow Protection*

Cow-protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to me means the entire sub-human world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realise his identity with all that lives. Why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was in India the best companion. She was the giver of plenty. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible. The cow is a poem on pity. One reads pity in the gentle animal. She is the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means, protection of the whole dumb creation of God. The ancient seer, whoever he was, began with the cow. The appeal of the lower order of creation is all the more forcible because it is speechless. Cow-protection is the gift of Hinduism to the world. And Hinduism will live so long as there are Hindus to protect the cow.—*Young India*, (Oct. 6, 1921).

As I have said before in these pages, for me the cow is the purest type of sub-human life. She pleads before us on behalf of the whole of the sub-human species for justice to it at the hands of man, the first among all that lives. She seems to speak to us through her eyes, (let the reader look at them with my faith) "You are not appointed over us to kill us and eat our flesh or otherwise ill-treat us, but to be our friend and guardian."—*Young India*, (June 26, 1924).

I ventured to lay down the conditions of cow protection which are well worth repeating:—

1. Every such institution should be situated out in the open, where it is possible to have plenty, i.e., thousands of acres of open ground capable of growing fodder and giving exercise to the cattle. If I had the management of all the *goshalas*, I should sell the majority of the present ones at handsome profits and buy suitable plots in the vicinity except where the existing places may

be needed for mere receiving depots;

2. Every *goshala* should be turned into a model dairy and a model tannery. Every single bead of dead cattle should be retained and scientifically treated and the hide, bones, entrails, etc. should be used to the best advantage. I should regard the hide of dead cattle to be sacred and usable as distinguished from the hide and other parts of slaughtered cattle, which should be deemed to be unfit for human use or at least for Hindu use;

3. Urine and dung in many *goshalas* are thrown away. This I regard as criminal waste;

4. All *goshalas* should be managed under scientific supervision; and guidance;

5. Properly managed, every *goshala* should be and can be made self-supporting, donations being used for its extension. The idea is never to make these institutions profit-making concerns, all profits being utilised towards buying maimed and disabled cattle and buying in the open market all cattle destined for the slaughter-house;

6. This consummation is impossible if the *goshalas* take in buffaloes, goats, etc. So far as I can see, much as I would like it to be otherwise, not until the whole of India becomes vegetarian, can goats and sheep be saved from the butcher's knife. Buffaloes can be saved if we will not insist upon buffalo's milk and religiously avoid it in preference to cow's milk. In Bombay, on the other hand, the practice is to take buffalo's milk instead of cow's milk. Physicians unanimously declare that cow's milk is medically superior to buffalo's milk, and it is the opinion of dairy experts that cow's milk can by judicious management be made much richer than it is at present found to be. I hold that it is possible to save both the buffalo and the cow. The cow can be saved only if buffalo breeding is given up. The buffalo cannot be used for agricultural purposes on a wide scale. It is just possible to save the existing stock, if we will cease to breed it any further. It is no part of religion to breed buffaloes or, for that matter, cows. We breed for our own uses. It is cruelty to the cow as well as to the buffalo to breed the latter. Humanitarians should know that Hindu shepherds even at the present moment mercilessly kill young male buffaloes, as they cannot profitably feed them. To save the cow and her progeny—and that only is a feasible proposition—the Hindus will have to forego profits from the trade concerning the cow and her products, but never otherwise. Reli-

gion to be true must satisfy what may be termed humanitarian economics, i.e., where the income and the expenditure balance each other. The attainment of such economics is just possible with the cow and the cow only with the assistance of donations for some years from pious Hindus. It should be remembered that this great humanitarian attempt is being made in the face of a beef-eating world. Not till the whole world turns predominantly vegetarian is it possible to make any advance upon the limitations I have sought to describe. To succeed to that extent is to open the way for future generations to further effort. To overstep the limitation is to consign the cow for ever to the slaughter-house in addition to the buffalo and the other animals.

Hindus and the humanitarian societies in charge of *goshalas* and *pinjrapolese*, if they are wisely religious, will bear the foregoing conditions of cow-protection in mind and proceed immediately to give effect to them.—*Young India*, (March 31, 1927).

Now I am not ready to believe that by merely protecting the animal, cow, one can attain *Moksha*. For *Moksha* one must completely get rid of one's lower feelings like attachment, hatred, anger, jealousy, etc. It follows, therefore that the meaning of cow-protection in terms of *Moksha* must be much wider and far more comprehensive than is commonly supposed. The cow-protection which can bring one *Moksha* must, from its very nature include the protection of everything that feels.—*Young India*, (Jan. 20, 1925).

## APPENDIX II

[We extract below two famous pronouncements by two savants made nearly half a century ago.]

### A

*Sir George Birdwood on Machinery and Handicraft in India.*

What is chiefly to be dreaded is the general introduction of machinery into India. We are just beginning in Europe to understand what things may be done by machinery, and what must be done by hand-work, if art is of the slightest consideration in the matter.

But if owing to the operation of certain economic causes, machinery were to be gradually introduced into India for the manufacture of its great traditional handicrafts, there would ensue an industrial revolution which, if not directed by an intelligent and instructed public opinion and the general prevalence of refined taste, would inevitably throw the traditional arts of the country into the same confusion of principles, and of their practical application to the objects of daily necessity, which has for three generations been the destruction of decorative art and of middle-class taste in England and North-Western Europe, and the United States of America.

The social and moral evils of the introduction of machinery into India are likely to be still greater. At present the industries of India are carried on all over the country, although hand-weaving is everywhere languishing in the unequal competition with Manchester and the Presidency Mills. But in every Indian village all the traditional handicrafts are still to be found at work.

Outside the entrance of the single village street, on an exposed rise of ground, the hereditary potter sits by his wheel moulding the swift revolving clay by the natural curves of his hands. At the back of the houses, which form the low, irregular street, there are two or three looms at work in blue, and scarlet, and gold,

the frames hanging between the acacia trees, the yellow flowers of which drop fast on the webs as they are being woven.

In the street, the brass and coppersmiths are hammering away at their pots and pans, and further down in the verandah of the rich man's bouse, is the jeweller working rupees and gold mohars into fair jewellery, gold and silver ear-rings, and round tires like the moon, bracelets, and tablets and nose-rings, and tinkling ornaments for the feet, taking his designs from the fruit and flowers around him, or from the traditional form represented in the paintings and carvings of the great temple, which rises over the grove of mangoes and palm at the end of the street above the lotus-covered village tank.

At half-past three or four in the afternoon the whole street is lighted up by the moving robes of the women going down to draw water from the tank, each with two or three water-jars on her head; and so, while they are going and returning in single file, the scene glows like Titian's canvas, and moves like the stately procession of the Pan-athenaic frieze.

Later, the men drive in the mild grey kine from the moaning plain, the looms are folded up, the coppersmiths are silent, the elder gather in the gate, the lights begin to glimmer in the fast-falling darkness, the feasting and the music are heard on every side, and late into the night the songs are sung from the Ramayana or Mahabharata.

The next morning with sunrise, after the simple oblations and adorations performed in the open air before the houses, the same day begins again. This is the daily life going on all over Western India in the village communities of the Dakhan, among a people happy in their simple manners and frugal way of life, and in the culture derived from the grand epics of a religion in which they live and move, and have their daily being, and in which the highest expression of their literature, art, and civilization has been stereotyped for 3,000 years.

But of late these handicraftsmen, for the sake of whose works the whole world has been ceaselessly pouring its bullion for 3,000 years into India, and who, for all the marvellous tissues and embroidery they have wrought, have polluted no rivers, deformed no pleasing prospects, nor poisoned any air; whose skill and individuality the training of countless generations has developed to the highest perfection, these hereditary handicraftsmen are being everywhere gathered from their democratic village com-

munities in hundreds and thousands into colossal mills of Bombay to drudge in gangs for tempting wages, at manufacturing piece-goods, in competition with Manchester, in the production of which they are no more intellectually and morally concerned than the grinder of a barrel organ in the tunes turned out from it.

I do not mean to depreciate the proper functions of machines in modern civilization, but machinery should be the servant and never the master of men. It cannot minister to the beauty and pleasure of life, it can only be the slave of life's drudgery; and it should be kept rigorously in its place—in India as well as in England.

When in England machinery is, by the force of cultivated taste and opinion, no longer allowed to intrude into the domain of art manufactures which belong exclusively to the trained mind and hand of individual workmen, wealth will become more equally diffused throughout society, and the working classes through the elevating influence of their daily work, and the growing respect for their talent, and skill, and culture will rise at once in social, civil and political position, raising the whole country to the highest classes with them; and Europe will learn to taste of some of that content and happiness in life which is to be still found in the Pagan East, as it was once found in Pagan Greece and Rome.

## B

### *E. B. Havell on the official suppression of Indian Craftsmanship at the Present-Day*

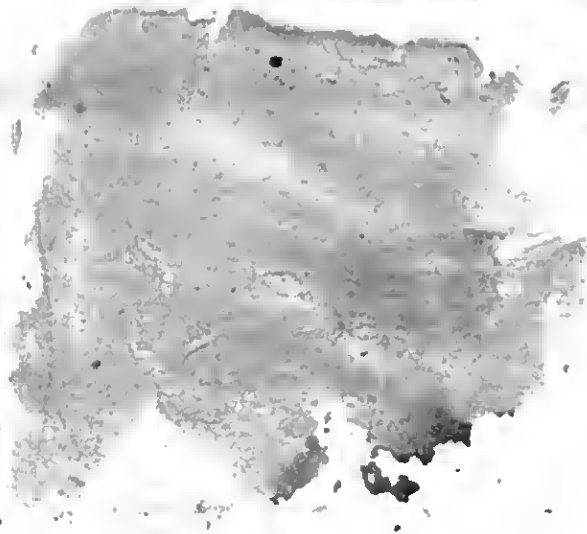
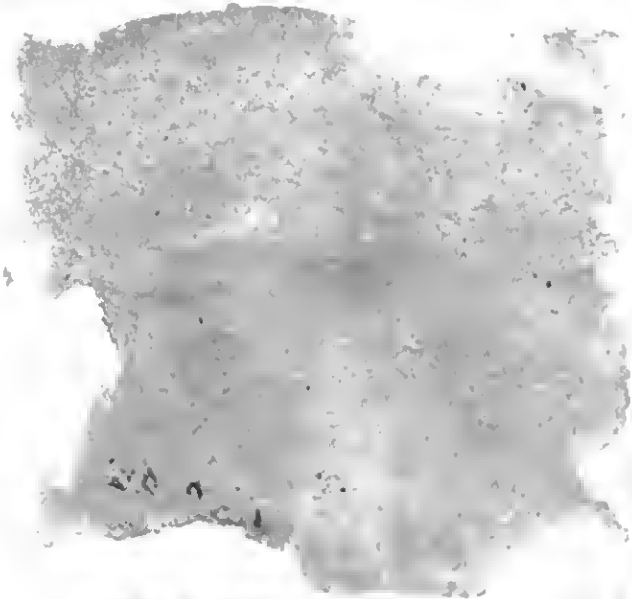
India still possesses a large body of trained craftsmen who practise the art of building on similar principles and produce similar results to those of the great mediæval builders of Europe. They enter no University, for Indian Universities were founded for supplying material for the official machinery, and make no provision for either art or religion. But their ancestors built the Taj, the shrines of Mount Abu, and countless other master-pieces; they constructed the Moghul palaces, public offices, irrigation works, and everything of practical utility that the art of building could provide.

How does our departmentalism provide for these needs to-day? A certain number of young men with no training either in art or in craft, learn by heart certain formularies for calculating



the maximum weight which an iron girder will bear, the smallest dimensions to which a wall can be reduced without collapsing, the cheapest rate at which a building can be constructed so as to bring it within the annual departmental budget. When a department has settled on paper the plan of the building it wants, one of these engineers with an archaeological turn of mind puts on to it a "Gothic" or "classic" front, according to departmental taste, and provides a certain scale of departmental decoration according to departmental rank and dignity. Then the hereditary Indian craftsman whose family has practised the art of building for untold centuries is brought in to learn the wisdom of the West by copying the departmental paper patterns. How bad the art becomes is, perhaps, difficult to be understood by those to whom an archaeological solecism is more offensive than an artistic eyesore; but it is easy to explain how wasteful and extravagant the system really is. To build one of the latest and perhaps the best of these archaeological structures in Calcutta, a large number of Indian caste-builders were employed. Many of them were both artists and craftsmen—they could design, build, and carve. The structural design had been settled for them departmentally, so they had no concern with that. There was also a considerable amount of ornament to be carved, but that also had been designed for them in proper departmental style, which happened to be Italian Renaissance, so they were not allowed to attempt that. Other men who had been trained in the European archaeological style in Bombay were brought over to copy mechanically the paper patterns prepared for them. These men were paid two rupees a day each. Now there are at the present time in the Orissa district, not far from Calcutta, and famous for its splendid native architecture, a considerable number of masons and builders who, within the last twenty years, have designed and carried out architectural decoration comparable with that of our finest mediaeval building in Europe, and infinitely more beautiful than the imitation Renaissance ornament of the building I have referred to. The average earning of these men is four annas a day, or one-eighth of the wages paid for executing the departmental decoration. They and their fellow-artists all over India are constantly in want of work, for departmentalism has no need of their services. Indian art cries out for bread; we give it museums, exhibitions, and archaeology.





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*"A book that is shut is but a block"*

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